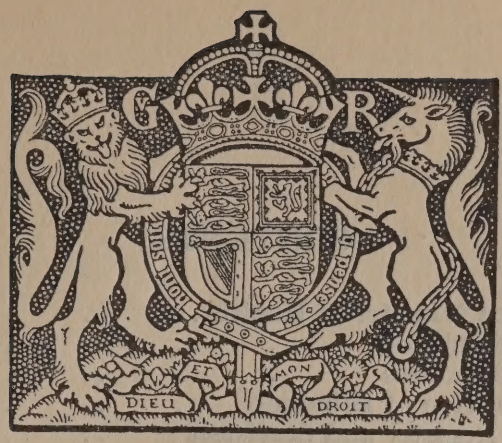

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND

HANDBOOK

ON THE

WELFARE OF THE BLIND

IN ENGLAND AND WALES

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.
To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses:
Adastral House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 120, George Street, Edinburgh;
York Street, Manchester; 1, St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff;
15, Donegall Square West, Belfast;
or through any Bookseller.

1927

Price 6*d*. Net.

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PREFACE.

I am pleased to accede to the request of the Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind that I should write a few words of introduction to this Handbook, which has been prepared by the Committee for the guidance of those engaged in work for the benefit of blind persons.

The Blind Persons Act, which was passed in 1920, recognised that blind persons have a special claim upon the community, and that claim is being met in most parts of the country by a willing partnership between the Local Authorities and numerous voluntary agencies, under the supervision of the Ministry of Health. The expenditure out of public funds, and from voluntary sources for the welfare of the blind, is some measure of the progress that is being made, and it is satisfactory to note that, in spite of financial stringency, the amount devoted to this purpose continues year by year to increase.

The Handbook gives an attractive and sympathetic account of the principles which have been found most effective in helping the blind, and of the way in which they have been carried out in practice. I believe it will not only prove valuable to those who are already engaged in the work, but that it will make a wide appeal to the public, who have always demonstrated their sympathy with those deprived of sight, and some of whom may perhaps be induced, after perusing this book, to offer their services in one of the many ways in which they will be welcome.

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

20*th July*, 1927.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND.

1. AIM OF THE HANDBOOK.

The aim of this handbook is not primarily to stimulate interest in, or to arouse sympathy for the blind. It starts with the assumption that this interest and sympathy already exist, and that the reader wishes to learn how they can be applied in practice. Its aim therefore is to state briefly the facts as to blindness in England and Wales, to outline the history of the growth of methods for assisting the blind and the legislation on the subject, to analyse the various categories of the blind and describe the differing methods of help available for each category, to set out the system of organisation, both official and voluntary, which is responsible at the present time for the Welfare of the Blind, and to refer to the powers that exist for the prevention of blindness. Appendices are added giving (1) a summary of the grants payable for the blind by the Ministry of Health and Board of Education, (2) the names of grant-aided Voluntary Agencies, with the addresses of the Secretaries, (3) the scales of augmentation for blind employees in Workshops recommended by the Advisory Committee, (4) a note on Old Age Pensions for the blind, (5) a note on National Health Insurance and Widows, Orphans and Old Age Contributory Pensions, and (6) a summary of official publications.

It is hoped that the handbook may be useful for those already engaged in the work, and, still more, that it may serve to guide potential helpers into channels for which they feel fitted, and in which they can most usefully render service.

2. FACTS AS TO BLINDNESS.

(*a*) Definition of Blindness.

There are two statutory definitions of blindness in this country. (1) Part V of the Education Act, 1921, re-enacts the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893, and provides that a blind child shall receive instruction suitable to such a child. In Section 69 of this Act "blind" is defined as meaning "too blind to be able to read the ordinary school books used by children." (2) Section 1 of the Blind Persons' Act, 1920, defines a blind person as one who is "so blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential." The Regulations of the Ministry of Health, under which grants are given for the Welfare of the Blind,

define a blind person as one who is "too blind to perform work for which eyesight is essential." This definition is for all practical purposes identical with that given in the Blind Persons Act. It will be seen that these definitions include many persons other than those totally blind, but that the educational definition, which is largely preventive in its purpose, is much wider than the others. Difficulties arise from this difference because a child who, quite properly, has been educated in a school for the blind may not be sufficiently blind to become eligible for the grants and benefits which are available to those who are blind within the definition contained in the Blind Persons Act and the Ministry's Regulations. The Ministry of Health in Circulars 681 and 780 explained the principles which they adopt in deciding whether a person is too blind to perform work for which eyesight is essential. Briefly, only visual factors can be taken into account and other bodily or mental infirmities should be disregarded. Where the acuity of vision (refractive error being corrected) is below $\frac{1}{20}$th of the normal ($\frac{3}{60}$ths Snellen), the person may usually be regarded as blind. Where the acuity is better than $\frac{6}{60}$ths (Snellen), the presumption is that the person is not blind unless there are such counterbalancing visual conditions as great contraction of the field of vision, marked nystagmus, &c. The test to be applied is not whether a person is unable to pursue his ordinary occupation, or any particular occupation, but whether he is too blind to perform work for which eyesight is essential.

The problem of the partially sighted, such as high myopes, is a difficult one, but it cannot be dealt with under the Blind Persons Act, though provision can be, and is, made for the education and, in some cases, for the vocational training of myopic children and young persons under the Education Act.

(*b*) The Register and Statistics.

All schemes under the Blind Persons Act, 1920, provide for the keeping of a register of the blind within each area, and statistics with regard to blindness are obtained from these registers.

The latest return of the numbers of blind persons was extracted from these registers on the 31st March, 1927. The total number in England and Wales was 46,822, as compared with 42,140 at the 31st March, 1925, 36,518 at the 30th June, 1923, and 34,894 at the 1st April, 1921. There is good reason to believe that the increase shown by these figures is due, not to an increase in the total number of blind persons, but to an increasing completeness in their registration. Full particulars of the return at the 31st March, 1925, are set out in the Appendix to the Sixth Report of the Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind and particulars of the figures for 1927 will be published in a later report. In 1927 there were 44,010 blind over 16 years of age. Of these 9,160 were employed; 635 trained but unemployed; 1,704 under training; 844

not under training but trainable, and 31,667 unemployable. Over 67·6 per cent., therefore, of the total number of the blind in England and Wales are classed as unemployable. The distribution of blindness according to age periods was as follows: 0–5, 258; 5–16, 2,554; 16–21, 1,670; 21–30, 3,162; 30–40, 4,474; 40–50, 5,331; 50–60, 7,495; 60–70, 9,737; over 70, 11,958; unknown, 183.

In the past, one of the most frequent causes of blindness was disease within a few days of birth. The success of the campaign against Ophthalmia Neonatorum is steadily reducing blindness from this cause, and consequently, while it may be hoped that the total amount of blindness will diminish, an increase in the proportion of blindness in the higher ages of life may be expected.

As the Advisory Committee state in their Fifth Annual Report, adequate and accurate statistical information as to the classification of the blind is a pre-requisite of efficient service, and the importance of an accurate and complete register is very great.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND.

The earliest known public institution established for the blind is supposed to be the Hospice des Quinze-Vingts in Paris, founded by St Louis in 1260, principally for soldiers who had lost their sight in war. From time to time many charitable benefactors have left bequests for the welfare of blind persons. The Royal Commission of 1889 reported that the interest of the invested funds left by various charitable persons for provision for the blind amounted to over £35,000 annually. Voluntary effort on an organised scale appears to have originated in 1784 when Valentin Haüy founded L'Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles in Paris, the first school for the blind opened in Europe. In 1790 the first institution of the kind in this country was established at Liverpool by Edward Rushton, who lost his own sight during a voyage in tending a cargo of negro slaves who were stricken with malignant ophthalmia. This Institution still continues at Hardman Street, Liverpool. It was speedily followed by a Blind Asylum at Edinburgh, in 1793 the school at Bristol was founded, and in 1799 St. George's School in London, which is now the Royal School at Leatherhead, and the Waterloo Road workshops. These were the first of a long line of charitable endeavour for the blind in this country.

Louis Braille, who was born in 1809, and was blinded at the age of five, worked on a system of embossed writing invented by a French artillery officer named Barbier and perfected his own system based on the six points in 1829. This has become the standard system of embossed writing and printing for the blind. Another system easier to learn, but not so compact, was invented by Dr. Moon, who was born in 1818, while Mr. H. M. Taylor, F.R.S. of Trinity College, Cambridge, invented the mathematical and chemical

formulæ which make it possible to produce scientific text books in Braille. Another Mr. Taylor invented the Taylor slate used for teaching arithmetic and algebra in all schools for the blind.

The earliest legislation in England* concerning the blind was the Poor Law of Queen Elizabeth of 1601, which laid the duty of relieving and maintaining destitute persons, including blind persons, upon their relatives, and where such failed upon the Overseers.

Apart from various statutes requiring Boards of Guardians to send children to special schools and to arrange for the education of blind adults, the first State action was taken in 1885, when a Royal Commission was appointed to consider the condition and education of the blind and of the deaf and dumb. The Commission reported in 1889, and its Report resulted in the passing of the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893, which provided for the compulsory attendance at school of all blind children between the ages of 5 and 16, and for the provision of special schools for their education. The Education Act of 1902 empowered Education Authorities to make provision for further education including that of the blind over 16.

Recent developments in Great Britain may be said to spring from a debate in the House of Commons on 11th March, 1914, when Mr. Wardle moved a resolution, which was carried without a division, " that in the opinion of this House, the present system of Voluntary effort in aid of the Blind People of this Country does not adequately meet their necessities, and that the State should make provision whereby capable Blind People might be made industrially self-supporting, and the incapable and infirm maintained in a proper and humane manner." Within two months of this debate a Departmental Committee was appointed " to consider the present condition of the blind in the United Kingdom, and the means available for (*a*) their industrial or professional training, and (*b*) their assistance, and to make recommendations." This Committee reported in 1917, and in December of that year, in accordance with one of their recommendations, an Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind was appointed by the President of the Local Government Board. The six reports published by this Advisory Committee from time to time give a full description of what has been and is being done for the Welfare of the Blind in recent years.

On the 7th August, 1919, the Ministry of Health issued regulations and rules governing grants out of public moneys to be distributed in aid of certain services carried on for the benefit of the blind, and with these grants began a great development in the work. These public moneys are voted annually by Parliament as part of the vote of the Ministry of Health. Appendix I summarises these grants.

**Note.*—Reference may be made to a chapter entitled " The Blind and Legislation " in the " Handbook for Home Teachers of the Blind," published by the National Institute.

In 1920 the Blind Persons Act was passed. This provides in Section 1 for the grant of Old Age Pensions to blind persons at the age of 50 instead of at the age of 70 (*see* Appendix 4). Section 2 imposes a duty on the Council of each County and County Borough to make arrangements, to the satisfaction of the Minister of Health, for promoting the Welfare of Blind persons ordinarily resident within their area, and to submit to the Minister a scheme for the exercise of their powers under the Act. They are given power to provide and maintain or contribute towards the provision and maintenance of workshops, hostels, homes, or other places for the reception of blind persons, whether within or without their area, and, with the approval of the Minister of Health, to do such other things as may appear to them desirable for the purpose. Section 3 provides for the registration of charities for the blind, and has been useful in extinguishing some undesirable charities.

4. SCHEMES UNDER THE BLIND PERSONS ACT, 1920.

All the 146 Councils of Counties and County Boroughs in England and Wales, who are the Local Authorities under the Blind Persons Act, except the Council of one recently constituted County Borough, have made schemes under the Act. The Ministry of Health indicated in memorandum 27/BD the lines on which schemes should be drawn. These schemes vary in detail, but a comprehensive scheme usually makes provision for the following matters :—

(*a*) Children under School Age. (*b*) Education and Training of (i) Children, and (ii) Young Persons and Adults. (*c*) Employment (i) in Workshops, (ii) by means of Home Workers' Schemes. (*d*) Hostels for Blind Workers. (*e*) Homes. (*f*) Unemployable Blind. (*g*) Home Teaching. (*h*) Registration.

The scheme usually records that the Local Education Authority will deal with education and training, and normally provides for the carrying out of other services (*e.g.*, Workshops, Home Workers, Home Teaching, or Registration), by one or more Voluntary Agencies working in the area of the Local Authority.

5. CLASSIFICATION OF THE BLIND.

No useful work can be done for the blind so long as they are all lumped into one undifferentiated class. The blind differ from one another as much as do the sighted, in temperament, intelligence, ability and power of concentration.

There is no simple formula for service to the blind. Every "case" is an individual with an individual's own peculiar gifts and failings, and the best work is done by those who study with most accuracy and sympathy the blind person whom they are trying to help. In its broadest form no one would question this, for obviously, the appropriate methods must differ in helping a blind baby, a girl just leaving the elementary school, a trained man of 25, or a

woman of 70. But it is true also in subtler ways. Should this clever boy be encouraged to go to Worcester College, and subsequently to the University, or is it wiser to play for safety and train him to a manual occupation in which he can count on employment? Has this girl a gift for music so deep and real that it will brave and overcome the disappointments of an overcrowded career? Is the mental dulness of this third child really mental deficiency, or only the result of neglect by unwise, indulgent or unsympathetic parents? In these examples, and a hundred others, the power to give real help, and to avoid disastrous mistakes, will depend on a sympathetic but penetrating diagnosis of each "case" as it arises.

This variety in the needs of the blind has its counterpart in the variety of gifts which can be brought to the help of the blind. The doctor can help to preserve a remnant of sight; the teacher can train blind children in special ways appropriate to their defect, the Home Teacher and Visitor can bring comfort and happiness into the homes and, by teaching Braille or simple pastime occupations, can give employment to brain and hand and so help to banish the intolerable tedium of an idle blindness; the skilled craftsman can train and encourage blind workmen; the business man can help to organise workshops on a satisfactory trading basis, and can render invaluable help in finding markets for the products of blind labour. It should be easy for any one of goodwill to find opportunity for using his or her special aptitude in the service of the blind.

The main classification of the blind is outlined in the headings of a scheme given in par. 4 above, and may be summarised as follows:—

(*a*) Children under 5 years of age. Par. 6.
(*b*) Children over 5 and under 16. Par. 7.
(*c*) Trainable blind. Par. 8.
(*d*) Employable blind. Pars. 9–13.
(*e*) Unemployable blind. Pars. 15–20.

6. Children under 5 Years of age.

The ordinary service under the Maternity and Child Welfare Act, 1918, is available for blind infants as for sighted infants, and is governed by Regulations dated the 9th August, 1918. Full advantage will, normally, be taken of this service in dealing with blind children under two. Where blind children between the ages of two and five are living under unsatisfactory home conditions, it may be possible for Maternity and Child Welfare Authorities, Local Education Authorities, Boards of Guardians or Voluntary Agencies, to arrange for them to be sent to nursery schools, *e.g.*, the Sunshine Homes established by the National Institute for the Blind, or other special schools certified by the Board of Education for the education of children of these ages. It is obviously in the interests of the child that it should remain at home unless the home conditions are so bad as to necessitate its removal. Advice

can often usefully be given to parents to assist them in the difficult problem of bringing up a blind child.

7. Children over 5 and under 16.

Part V of the Education Act, 1921, which embodies the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893, provides for the compulsory education of children too blind to be able to read the ordinary school books used by children, and for the provision of special schools for the purpose of such education.* The responsibility for this work rests on the Local Education Authority for elementary education under the supervision of the Board of Education, who pay grants in aid under the Education Acts.

This provision forms part of the general educational system of the country, but the leaving age for blind children is 16. Children may be, and for the most part are, sent to day or residential schools at the cost of the Local Education Authority, or, in the case of children under the care of the Guardians, at the cost of the Guardians. In the latter case, grant is payable by the Board of Education to the Managers of the schools.

8. The Trainable Blind.

In practically all cases it will be found that further education beyond the age of 16, whether secondary or technical, is essential if a blind person is trainable, and is to be adequately equipped for remunerative employment. The responsibility for this training is placed by the Education Act, 1921 (Section 11 and Part VI), on the Local Education Authority for higher education, viz., a County or County Borough Council. Section 2 (6) of the Blind Persons Act, 1920, provides that the Local Education Authority shall secure adequate and suitable provision for the technical education of blind persons, ordinarily resident in their area, who are capable of receiving and being benefited by such education.

The Board of Education have recognised courses of instruction at a number of training institutions* under Chapter VII of their Special Services Regulations (Grant Regulations No. 19) and pay grants to them under Chapter XI of those Regulations. Alternatively the Local Education Authority for higher education pay fees for the students whom they send to these Institutions, and receive the usual grant for higher education from the Board of Education in respect of this expenditure. A summary of the grants payable by the Board of Education is given in Appendix I.

As with the sighted so with the blind, there always will be some children whose promise justifies their proceeding to secondary

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* A list of "Certified Special Schools and Recognized Institutions for the Training of the Blind and other Defective Students, and Nursery Schools in England and Wales," is published by the Board of Education, List 42, price 1/-.

education with a view to a university or professional course. Worcester College provides secondary education for blind boys, and Chorley Wood College for blind girls. It is important, wherever possible, that a career should be mapped out in advance, because of the difficulty of finding employment for those blind persons who are not manual workers. The Royal Normal College at Norwood specialises in the training of blind boys and girls in music, typewriting and piano tuning, and as elementary school teachers. A specialised training in massage is given in the National Institute's School of Massage.

Blind persons in need of manual training fall into two classes, those already blind who have just left the special school, and those who become blind later in life. Experience shows that it is rarely possible to train a blind person for remunerative employment who is over 50 years of age. On the other hand, the memory of a once seen world is a great help to those who become blind. Before incurring the expense and trouble of training, it is most important to be satisfied (*a*) whether the person, when his training is completed, will, or will not, be a blind person within the meaning of the Regulations of the Ministry of Health, which govern grants in respect of employees in Workshops and Home Workers Schemes, because if he is not blind he will not be able to share in the assistance which is limited to the blind, but will have to earn his living in competition with sighted people (Circulars 681 and 780 of the Ministry of Health should be referred to in this connection); (*b*) that the person is likely, as a result of training, to become reasonably proficient, and (*c*) that there are openings for remunerative employment for him at the conclusion of his training.

It follows that there should be the closest possible co-ordination between the training Institutions and the employing Agencies (Workshops and Home Workers Schemes) and equally close co-operation between the Local Education Authority, or other body responsible for the blind person's training, and the Local Authorities who will be responsible for him when his training is over. For this purpose it is important that the training Institution should keep careful progress records of each pupil, shewing in particular his quality of output, speed of execution and independence of working, and that these records should be available for consultation by would-be employers. Constant touch should be kept with the conditions in the various trades so that, in selecting the trade for each student, regard should be had to his personal aptitude for the occupation or trade in which it is proposed to train him, the locality in which he lives, and the prospects of his obtaining remunerative employment there. Many training Institutions endeavour to keep in touch with their old students, and this is of great value.

Much avoidable suffering may be caused to the blind by the neglect of these considerations, and the Ministry of Health, in

consultation with the Board of Education, dealt fully with them in Circular 387 issued on 24th April, 1923.

9. Employable Blind.

It is desirable that wherever possible a blind person should be provided with regular employment, not only because he should, as far as his affliction permits, support himself, but also because lack of occupation and interest is the worst consequence of his disability.

Where a blind person who has been trained for a manual occupation lives within reach of a Workshop for the blind he will normally be employed there, but, where no Workshop is available, arrangements should be made under a Home Workers' Scheme for him to follow his trade as a Home Worker. Where there is a Workshop in the area in which the blind person resides which is also a training centre, the change from training to employment will simply mean the passing from one department to another in the same Institution. If the Workshop has no training department the blind person will have gone to another Institution for his training, on the completion of which he will return to the Workshop in his native town or, if there is no Workshop, into a Home Workers' Scheme.

The non-manual worker is in a different category and must be dealt with separately.

10. *Workshops.*—The management of a Workshop is a complicated business which cannot be discussed in detail in a handbook like this. It involves a selection of trades suitable for the district and constant alertness to find openings for new trades. It demands a continuous search for markets, wholesale or retail, the obtaining of contracts from Local Authorities and others, and possibly the carrying on of a retail shop. A balance has to be struck between a dangerous accumulation of stock and throwing employees out of work, or putting them on short time. Intricate questions arise as to rates of pay, methods of augmentation, sickness, holidays, hours of labour, National Health and Unemployment Insurance.

There are 57 Workshops throughout England and Wales in receipt of grant from the Ministry of Health. Some are large Institutions employing over 100 persons, the largest employs over 180. Others are much smaller, and a number only employ from 10 to 20. While there are some admirable small Workshops, it is obvious that a larger Workshop will be more profitable than a small one. It can afford more skilled supervision and can offer a greater variety of trades to suit the varying capacities of its employees.

The trades usually practised in workshops are, for men :—basket making, mat making, brush making, bedding, upholstery, cabinet making, cane furniture, chair seating and boot repairing. For women.—Hand knitting, round and flat machine-knitting,

light baskets, bedding, chair-seating, wiredrawn brush making, rug making, and, in one or two places, hand-loom-weaving.

The Regulations of the Ministry of Health provide that weekly pay should be " at the Trade Union or other standard rate customary in the particular class of work on which the blind person is employed," and that " the recognised standards of the trade in which the workshop employees are engaged, so far as they relate to rates of pay, bonus, hours of labour and holidays, must be observed by the Agency."

But the handicap of blindness prevents most blind persons from earning a livelihood if they are paid only what they earn on a strictly commercial basis. It is necessary therefore to augment their earnings from sources other than the trading account. It is important to keep these payments by way of augmentation out of the trading account in order that it may clearly show the financial state of the Institution's trading judged on a commerical basis. A variety of methods of augmentation are in use throughout the country. The aims of a sound method should be to encourage individual output and to give help where it is most needed.

Apart from the encouragement to effort which a well-considered scheme of augmentation provides, capacity affects output, and the degree of blindness is an important factor in capacity, particularly in the matter of speed. Other things being equal, a totally blind man will produce less than one who has some measure of sight. For this reason, many schemes of augmentation provide for a scale diminishing as the earnings rise ; in other words, they give most help to those who need it most. The Advisory Committee have suggested three scales of augmentation which are set out in Appendix 3.

11. *Home Workers.*—Where a blind person returns home after his training is completed, and no workshop is within reach, he can carry on his trade at home under a Home Workers' Scheme.

He will need tools and equipment, supervision and technical advice, assistance in obtaining materials and in marketing the goods he produces. For these purposes it is necessary that the Local Authority, or the Voluntary Agency should formulate a proper scheme and obtain the approval of the Ministry of Health. The Ministry will then pay grants in respect of approved Home Workers. It is usually best that such a scheme should be supervised by an Agency which is carrying on a Workshop. It is easier for them to buy a supply of material, to advise and assist in the disposal of goods and to organise helpful supervision by experts in the trade. The Home Worker should be encouraged to find his own market for his goods, but where he is unable to do so he should be assisted by sales of work, garden parties, exhibitions, and other opportunities for the sale of goods made by the blind, which are organised by the supervising Agency. Some Agencies assist in disposing of goods by travelling motor shops.

A well-organised scheme can give help in many ways. One man has been trained to make baskets of a kind for which there is no ready sale near his home. He is brought to headquarters for a short "refresher" course from which he learns to make the special article which is in demand. A woman's knitting machine is out of order and the supervisor visits her and puts it right. A third needs advice as to how to find buyers for her goods. An advertisement helps a fourth. To all, the fact that there is a sympathetic organisation to whom they can refer in difficulty, is a great encouragement. The diffident are encouraged, the unskilful or careless corrected, and the lazy induced to do better. The supervision of Home Workers is often carried out by Home Teachers, but in the larger schemes special supervisors of Home Workers are appointed. Though for the purpose of grant they are classed as Home Teachers they, in fact, specialise in the care of Home Workers, and are skilled in the trades affected.

It is an essential condition of a Home Workers' Scheme that the occupation should not be a mere pastime but should be definitely on the plane of industrial effort. A Home Worker should support himself out of earnings assisted by augmentation like the worker in the Workshop. Accordingly the Ministry of Health define "home-workers" in paragraph 19 of their Grant Regulations as "adult blind persons who, for sufficient reasons, are employed elsewhere than in a workshop in occupations usually practised in workshops and are attached for the purpose of care, assistance and supervision to an approved agency." The Ministry have recognised properly qualified piano tuners as Home Workers but under the definition they are unable to recognise such classes as shopkeepers, dealers, poultry farmers, telephone operators, shorthand typists and the like. They also only pay full grant in respect of men who earn 16s. or over per week and of women who earn 8s. or more, in order to encourage employment on a self-supporting basis.

Augmentation of earnings is, of course, needed for Home Workers, and methods vary.

It will usually be necessary at the outset to provide the Home Worker with a set of tools and sometimes a shed as a workshop. Where the consent of the Ministry has been obtained before the expenditure is incurred, a grant, normally of 50 per cent., is payable.

12. *The Non-Manual Worker.*—Reference has been made on page 8 to the training for a non-manual career. It is not possible to systematise the provision of employment for such blind persons to the same degree as in manual occupations. The treatment of each case will depend in an even higher degree than it does in manual work on the temperament, natural gifts and education of the blind person. Blind men of exceptional gifts have made good in the church, in the law, in political life and elsewhere. The great name of Milton shews how the very affliction of blindness itself can be turned to the highest uses of poetry: "that I may see and tell

Of things invisible to mortal sight." Scientific research usually demands sight, but even here some blind men are making good, e.g., at anthropology. Everyone should attempt to expand the possibilities of the blind.

At the same time, where a remunerative career is required, and where an overmastering gift of genius does not preclude choice, there are certain careers which are more promising for the blind than others. Music is the most obvious of these, and many blind men and women have been successful as musicians, whether as organists, music teachers, or in other ways. The chief difficulty here lies in the fact that the profession is overcrowded, and a real aptitude for music should be proved before encouragement is given. The National Institute and St. Dunstan's have found a promising development in massage, and a number of blind persons are now practising this profession with success. In America blind men have been successful as insurance agents.

In a number of occupations hearing is more important than sight. Many blind persons are successful telephone operators. In some cases a blind person, through unusual acuteness of hearing, may be able to specialise. Typewriting and shorthand can be done by the blind, but competition is severe, and the blind typist is handicapped by inability to do the ordinary office work for which sight is required.

Few works of greater promise for the blind can be undertaken than constant experiment with a view to finding new occupations for them and scientific study of the work for which they are specially fitted.

13. *Occupation in ordinary factories.*—One of the most interesting of these experiments in recent years has been the finding of work for blind persons in ordinary factories. This experiment is still in its infancy in this country and abroad, but one or two instances encourage the hope that in carefully selected processes in ordinary factories it may be possible for blind persons to become entirely self-supporting. Workers among the blind should be constantly exploring the possibilities of such employment in local industries.

14. Unemployed Blind.

These fall into two categories—those who are capable of being employed and those who are not. It is most important to distinguish between them, and every scheme for the aid of the necessitous blind should provide that anyone who is capable of being trained and usefully employed should be sent for training. A decision must depend on a careful study of the facts of each case, but the possibility of employment should never be overlooked. The returns as to the blind in 1927 shewed a total of 844 who were capable of training, but not yet receiving it.

15. Unemployable Blind.

The largest category of the blind remains that of the unemployable blind. There were 31,667 in 1927 out of a total of 46,822, or 67.6 per cent. A very small proportion of these possessed private means; a larger number are married women engaged in domestic duties in their homes. Probably from 18,000 to 20,000 are definitely incapable of performing any work of economic worth; 6,323 of them suffer from physical or mental defects in addition to their blindness. Some are accommodated in recognised Homes for the Blind, and a number are inmates of Poor Law Institutions. But the great majority reside in their own homes, are over 50 years of age, are eligible for Old Age Pensions and form almost the whole of the 14,563 blind pensioners in receipt of Old Age Pensions under the Blind Persons Act. Over 84 per cent. of the blind between 50 and 70 are in receipt of Old Age Pensions.

16. It will be seen that any scheme which concentrates on the education, training and employment of the blind, to the exclusion of the unemployable blind, is failing to deal with the larger proportion of the blind. One of the most striking developments in blind welfare work since 1919 has been the redressing of this balance, and more attention is being devoted to the needs of the unemployable blind than ever before.

These needs are twofold—financial and social. Even more important than means of livelihood is a life worth living.

17. THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE UNEMPLOYABLE BLIND.

The circumstances of these blind vary a great deal. A few have sufficient means of their own, some have husbands in a position to support them, others are in receipt of Old Age Pensions, or pensions from one of the Pension Societies for the Blind. Some who were insured are in receipt of Disablement Benefit, others are receiving compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Acts, or in other ways, in consequence of accident. Some are children living in good homes with their parents, or parents living with their children, and, so far as maintenance is concerned, are not in need of assistance. Others are lonely, helpless and destitute.

The first step is to make a careful analysis of the circumstances and means of each unemployable blind person. Until this has been done, all is guess work. When it is made it sometimes startles the workers with the magnitude of the need and sometimes reassures them by shewing that the problem is more manageable than they expected. It is as important to prevent waste of money on those who need no help as to make sure that no case needing help is overlooked.

When the analysis has been made, a definite policy of assistance should be laid down, and within it each case considered separately. In one instance the problem may be solved by finding relatives willing to help, in another a pension from a Blind Pension Society, or from a Parochial Charity, may make all the difference between straitened means and comfort. At the other end of the scale are the destitute, and the ultimate responsibility for dealing with these rests in law on the Guardians.

18. In dealing with blind persons the Guardians can have regard only to the question of destitution, and in some cases, the Blind Persons Act Authority have taken over the care and relief of all the blind, whether destitute or not. Another method, which has much to recommend it in suitable cases, is for the Guardians to appoint one of the officers of the Blind Institution to act as an Assistant Relieving Officer according to a definite scheme. Here the blind person deals with the Institution alone and not with the Guardians, and the Institution recover from the Guardians the cost of the approved out-relief administered by them.

19. In their Memorandum 27/B.D., which described what a scheme under the Blind Persons Act should contain, the Ministry of Health, in dealing with the unemployable blind, said, "it will rest upon the Local Authorities under the Act as an essential part of their duty to secure that reasonable provision is made for these persons." A large and growing number of authorities are laying down a scale up to which the income of each unemployable blind person should be brought, and have voted substantial sums to assist the funds of Voluntary Agencies to meet these payments. Others prefer to leave relief to the Guardians, but in all cases it is incumbent on the Local Authority under the Blind Persons Act to "secure that reasonable provision is made."

20. THE SOCIAL NEEDS OF THE UNEMPLOYABLE BLIND.

The needs of every class of the blind extend far beyond the means of livelihood. The imagination of men has always been touched by the tragic lot of a lonely blind person without resources within himself. A man or woman who suddenly loses sight is often the prey of blank despair, and the most humane and most fertile work which can be done by a worker among the blind is to inspire hope and contentment by shewing the many ways in which life can still be made worth while. The pivot of this social work among the blind is the Home Teacher.

21. THE HOME TEACHER.

The name "Home Teacher" is used in the Grant Regulations, and is the name by which these workers are generally known.

Teaching Braille and Moon and pastime occupations is an essential part of their work, but is only a part of it. Home Visiting and Welfare Work generally are also included. Home teaching for the blind was first organised in 1834 by the founding of the Indigent Blind Visiting Society, and it has developed to such an extent that there are now 360 Home Teachers, both men and (more often) women, employed throughout England and Wales, considerably more than three times the number in 1919. The aim of this service is to secure that all the blind who need visiting should receive visits systematically. In some places voluntary visiting has been organised efficiently, but generally it is necessary to organise systematic and regular visiting through salaried Home Teachers, who not only devote their whole time to the work, but have been specially trained for it. All Home Teachers in respect of whom grant is paid need the approval of the Ministry of Health, and it is a condition of approval in the case of all appointed since the 1st April, 1923, that they should obtain the home teaching certificate of the College of Teachers of the Blind within two years of appointment.

22. The Home Teachers' duties are so varied that it is impossible to describe them fully. They may, however, be conveniently summarised under six headings :—

(i) *Visiting.* (ii) *Teaching Braille or Moon.* (iii) *Teaching pastime occupations.* (iv) *Hygiene.* (v) *Welfare work.* (vi) *Social centres.*

(i) *Visiting.*—Probably the most valuable work of the Home Teacher lies in the simple and human way of creating contact, winning confidence and making friends. With the sick and the feeble this may be the only service which can be given. The Home Teacher may be asked to write a letter or see the need of repairing clothes or cleaning the room. As a friend there is no limit to the possibilities of service.

(ii) *Teaching of Braille or Moon.*—For occupying the mind through long hours of loneliness there is no resource so great as reading, and the Home Teacher will always endeavour, wherever there is sufficient mental alertness, to teach Braille. For those who have lost delicacy of touch through manual labour, or for those who find the Braille notation too difficult, the simpler Moon type can be taught. Good Home Teachers will make a point of getting to know the kind of literature that each of their readers prefers and will try to interest them in books and ideas. For this purpose they will keep in touch with the National Library through their local organisation and will see that the books needed are supplied.

Much can be done to stimulate the minds of those who cannot read. Books and new papers can be read aloud.

or the blind taken to suitable lectures or meetings. In many cases the lack of anyone to take them to places of public worship is keenly felt and arrangements can often be made to provide escorts. Sometimes a regular correspondence in Braille is kept up between blind persons, or between them and Home Teachers, and this not only develops facility in reading and writing Braille but exercises the faculty of self expression.

(iii) *Pastime Occupations.*—The function of a Home Teacher is quite different from that of a Supervisor of Homeworkers, and pastime occupation is taken up not in order to make a livelihood but to divert and exercise the mind. A pastime occupation can include other things than handicrafts, *e.g.*, music, games, or domestic work; or it may include handicrafts like knitting, crochet, string-bag making, chair-seating, bead work, wool-rug making and raffia work. The goods, when made, can sometimes be sold, and the small income from the sales may be very welcome to the blind, but it is occupation and not income which is the aim of pastime occupations.*

(iv) *Hygiene.*—The Home Teacher should always be watching the health of the blind. Suggestions can often be made on personal hygiene and diet, and on the cleanliness, ventilation, and sanitary condition of the home. One of the greatest difficulties of the blind is to take enough exercise in the open air to maintain health, and constant care should be devoted to this either by taking out the blind for walks or arranging for others to do so. In some cases a breakdown can be avoided by providing a holiday. There are Holiday Homes in various parts of the country.

(v) *Welfare Work.*—Home Teachers, like other welfare workers, must know the resources which are available. They will know all the hospitals in their district and can arrange for nursing at a moment's notice. They should be familiar with the various sources of financial assistance, whether from the Poor Law, a Pension Society for the Blind, a Parochial Charity, an Institution for the Blind, or the Local Authority. They will, either directly or indirectly through the Institution which employs them, keep in touch with the Local Education Authority as regards training. Close touch with the Mental Deficiency Committee, or the Voluntary Association working in connection with the Committee, will be of great assistance in dealing with the blind who are mentally defective. If bus and tram journeys can be obtained free they will assist

*The question of pastime occupations has been admirably discussed in prize essays, published in "The Teacher of the Blind," March and June, 1927.

their blind to obtain passes. If charitable people have theatre or concert tickets or wireless sets to dispose of, the Home Teacher will ask for them. There is no limit to the resourcefulness of a good Home Teacher.

(vi) *Social Centres.*—The blind, like the sighted, feel the strain of a life of solitude, and much good work is being done by organising social centres at which blind persons meet regularly for conversation, music, games, reading aloud, or pastime occupations. This work is still in an experimental state so far as details are concerned, but there can be no doubt as to the immense value of these organised social gatherings. Home Teachers usually are in charge, but the more assistance they can secure from voluntary workers the better.

As a rule social centres will be more easily organised in urban areas. The rural blind are scattered and it is difficult to collect them together. In some counties friends fetch them in motor cars and organise the centres. Where this is not possible much may be done in the villages by interesting Women's Institutes. Some Institutes have adopted a blind person, others have included the products of their handicrafts in sales of work. The human interest of the members of the Institutes will be invaluable.

23. It will be seen that Home Teachers with, say, the names of 80 blind persons on their books can rarely hope unaided to render in the fullest degree all the services set out above. There is no more promising outlet for the efforts of volunteers interested in the welfare of the blind than to assist in this sphere of the work. Volunteers can visit in the homes, can take the blind out for walks, can read aloud to them books and newspapers, can assist at social centres, concerts and entertainments, and in a variety of ways can render great service. But it is desirable that this service should not be haphazard. It should form a co-ordinated part of a well-planned scheme and to this end *volunteers should offer their services to their nearest Voluntary Agency for the blind and should, as far as possible, keep in touch with the Home Teacher.* The addresses of these Agencies are given in Appendix 2. If in doubt as to which Agency, the volunteer can consult the responsible local authority, viz., the Council of the County Borough or County.

24. HOSTELS FOR BLIND WORKERS.

While it is desirable that blind persons should, wherever possible, reside in their homes, a number of them have no homes and, in various parts of the country, hostels for blind workers have been provided near workshops. For the most part the occupants of these hostels are workshop employees, but in some cases home

workers and others are provided for. Much good work in brightening the lot of the blind workers is done in these hostels and some of them are models of their kind.

25. HOMES.

The lot of lonely aged or infirm blind persons is often peculiarly sad, and a number of homes have been provided in various parts of the country. This service does much to render happy the declining years of those who would otherwise be in great distress.

26. ORGANISATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

(*a*) Official.

(i) Central.
(ii) Local.

(i) *Central Organisations.*

The Ministry of Health and the Board of Education are the Departments of State responsible to Parliament for the Welfare of the Blind. The Board of Education deal with education, both elementary and higher (the special schools and the training departments, the latter being either independent Institutions or connected with Workshops for the Blind). The Ministry of Health is the Central Department for all matters relating to the blind under the Blind Persons Act, and they administer the grants payable out of moneys voted by Parliament for the Welfare of the Blind. Clearly the Ministry can only lay down a general policy and must leave the handling of individual cases to the Voluntary Agencies or the Local Authorities. The Ministry and the Board of Education have appointed Inspectors, some of whom are women, who are constantly visiting Institutions, Local Authorities and Local Committees throughout the country, and reporting to their Departments. In this way the Departments are kept in touch with local conditions, and the Inspectors are able by friendly advice and suggestion to share the experience gained.

The grants paid by the Ministry amounted to £69,886 in 1921–2, and to £112,510 in 1926–7. To this must be added an expenditure from the Exchequer of some £360,000 a year on Old Age Pensions for the Blind, and a considerable sum (probably about £130,000) by way of grant through the Board of Education in connection with education and training.

(ii) *Local Authorities.*

The Blind Persons Act, 1920, imposes on Local Authorities under that Act the duty of making arrangements to the satisfaction of the Minister of Health for promoting the welfare of blind persons ordinarily resident within their areas. These Authorities are the

62 County Councils, the Common Council of the City of London and the 83 County Borough Councils. In nearly every case the Local Authorities delegate the actual work, or a portion of it, to the Voluntary Agencies working in their areas, and many of them include in their estimates substantial sums to assist them in that work. The growth of the financial assistance rendered by Local Authorities may be judged from the fact that, while they voted £14,671 for this service in 1921–2, in 1925–6 they voted £135,946.

(*b*) Voluntary Organisations.

There is a great variety of Voluntary Organisations for the welfare of the blind, as may be seen by a reference to Appendix 2. Working in individual towns or districts are Institutions, sometimes of great size, which carry on technical training and manage Workshops and Home Workers Schemes, and in some cases Home Teaching services also. There are also a number of Home Teaching Societies who confine their attention mainly to the unemployable blind. Many of the Workshops and Home Teaching Societies are situate in County Boroughs, and they usually render services in respect of the whole of the County Borough, and of the piece of the county immediately surrounding it. For the centre of their area, therefore, they carry on services on behalf of one Local Authority, the County Borough Council, and for the rest of the area on behalf of another, the County Council.

Associated with these local Agencies the country is covered by the Union of Counties Associations, which is a union of seven Counties Associations, as follows :—

> Northern, Eastern, Metropolitan (sub-divided into (*a*) the County of London, (*b*) the Adjacent Counties, the latter covering the south-east of England), Western, Midland, South Wales, and North-Western.

These Counties Associations have formed in most parts of England, outside the Northern Counties Association, where the ground was largely covered by existing Institutions, separate associations for each county. These are usually the agents of the County Council for their work for the Welfare of the Blind in rural areas and in towns in which no agency is already working. They cover systematically the whole of the county area which is not already provided for. They usually carry out registration, the Home Teaching service and the care of the unemployable blind.

There are, in addition, a number of societies whose services are not local. A large number of Pension Societies exist. The Gardner Trust administers, in the interests of the blind, a very large bequest left by Mr. Gardner. The Clothworkers' Company also devote much money and other service to the blind.

There are three important organisations whose work is of national character—The National Institute for the Blind; the National Library for the Blind and St. Dunstan's

The National Institute for the Blind publish, on a large scale, books, newspapers, magazines, and other literature for the blind, in Braille and Moon, and provide apparatus and games for the blind. They also have established a number of Sunshine Homes for Blind Babies, the Chorley Wood College for Girls referred to above, and a number of residential and holiday homes for the blind, and render other services of a national character. They also conduct one service of a purely local nature, a large Home Workers' Scheme in London south of the Thames and in the South-eastern counties.

The National Library for the Blind is a circulating library of nearly 150,000 volumes, which supplies books, free of cost, either directly to blind persons or through local organisations or public libraries. It produces by hand, through voluntary and blind workers, a large number of books in Braille which are not available to the blind in any other form. The Post Office conveys the books to and from the readers at reduced rates of postage.

St. Dunstan's was organised by Sir Arthur Pearson during the War for the training, placement and after-care of soldiers, sailors and airmen blinded in the War. A complete service is rendered by St. Dunstan's to these men, and ordinarily it is not necessary for the local Agency to make any special arrangements for their welfare.

The sources of income of Voluntary Agencies are varied, *e.g.*, trust funds, subscriptions and donations, flag days, and other money-raising efforts. The societies to whom the Local Authorities have delegated the blind work in their areas receive, in addition to these voluntary contributions, such grants as may be earned under the regulations of the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health, and the sums voted by Local Authorities themselves. The Guardians can also make subscriptions to their funds.

Many feared that the introduction of State or rate-aided services for the blind would tend to reduce the volume of voluntary subscriptions. So far is this from being the case that the total income from voluntary sources of agencies recognised by the Ministry of Health for grant has risen from £378,535 in 1922–3 to £420,463 in 1924–5.

27. PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

Prevention is better than cure, and the best way of solving the problem of blindness, is, wherever possible, to prevent its occurrence. An important report was issued by the Departmental Committee on the Causes and Prevention of Blindness under the Chairmanship of the Right Hon. G. H. Roberts in September, 1922.*

Reference has already been made to the important results which have been achieved in checking blindness in infancy through the careful treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum. This disease is

*Copies of this report can be obtained from H.M. Stationery Office, or through any bookseller, price 4/-.

compulsorily notifiable, and all workers for the blind should urge immediate medical attention for any infant with inflamed eyes. A delay of even a few hours may have disastrous effects. A number of societies have issued useful leaflets upon this matter.

Local Education Authorities are required, with the sanction of the Board, under Sections 16 and 80 of the Education Act, 1921, to make arrangements for attending to the health of children educated in Public Elementary Schools, and these arrangements invariably include provision for attending to the children's eyesight. All children attending these schools are medically inspected on admission, at 8 and 12 years of age, and those who are found on the occasion of these inspections or at other times to be suffering from defects of vision are referred for refraction and full visual examination by an oculist. Spectacles are prescribed and provided, where required, at the expense of the parent with assistance, where necessary, from the Authority.

A number of Local Education Authorities have also provided, for myopic and other partially sighted children, special schools and classes, the main object of which is to check further deterioration of vision and so far as possible to prevent blindness ensuing.

Local Authorities have been empowered, by Section 66 of the Public Health Act, 1925, with the consent of the Minister of Health, to make such arrangements as they may think desirable for assisting in the prevention of blindness, and in particular for the treatment of persons ordinarily resident within their area suffering from any disease of, or injury to, the eyes. They have power to incur expenditure for this purpose, and some of them have made financial arrangements for the treatment in voluntary hospitals of diseases of, and injury to, the eyes of persons ordinarily resident in their district. The commoner diseases of the eye are dealt with in the Committee's report, which makes recommendations for the treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, for educational provision for children of impaired vision, and as regards the education of medical students in ophthalmology. Blindness is caused by accident as well as disease, and the Committee make recommendations as to the precautions which should be taken in certain dangerous industrial processes. They refer to the danger of injury from flying shuttles in the textile industry, to the use of screens on lathes and abrasive wheels, and of goggles and masks for certain industrial processes, and in quarries, and to the provision of first-aid treatment for eye injuries in mining. They also recommend that all possible steps should be taken to encourage the development of Works and Safety Committees with regard to the prevention of accidents, the use of safety devices and methods of propaganda.

Voluntary Agencies, and all who are interested in the Welfare of the Blind, should be familiar with the resources available for the treatment of eye trouble, and should assist the sufferers to obtain proper treatment.

APPENDIX 1.

Summary of Grants payable:—

(i) *By the Ministry of Health.*

Regulations for Grants in aid of the Welfare of the Blind were issued by the Ministry of Health on the 7th August, 1919, and are still operative. They provide for grants to Agencies for the Welfare of the Blind at the following rates:—

Workshops	£20 per blind worker per annum.
Home Workers	£20 per blind worker per annmu.
Homes	£13 per blind resident per annum.
Hostels	£5 per blind resident per annum.
Home teaching	£78 per teacher per annum.
Initial expenditure in respect of tools and equipment for Home Workers.	50 per cent. of expenditure.
Book production	2*s.* 6*d.* per volume; 2*d.* per copy of magazine, periodical or sheet music.
Counties Associations	£20 per 100 registered blind persons resident in area per annum.

No capital grants other than those for tools and equipment of Home Workers are payable to Voluntary Agencies for the Blind.

Where a Local Authority provide any of the above services direct, the above grants are payable. In addition, grant is payable to a Local Authority in respect of approved capital expenditure whether incurred directly or by way of a capital contribution to a Voluntary Agency, normally at the rate of 50 per cent. grant of the annual loan charges.

(ii) *By the Board of Education.*

Regulations for Grant in aid of the Education, Training and Maintenance of Blind Children and Students are contained in the Board of Education (Special Services) Regulations, 1925—Grant Regulations No. 19.

Grant is payable to Local Education Authorities for Elementary and Higher Education in respect of this work under Grant Regulations No. 1 and Grant Regulations No. 4 respectively.

The grants payable in respect of Special Schools for blind children between the ages of two and sixteen and full-time Courses of Higher Education for Blind Students, recognised under Chapters 6 and 7 respectively of the Board of Education (Special Services) Regulations, 1925, are as follows:—

In the case of schools or institutions maintained by Local Education Authorities or of children or students sent by Local Education Authorities to schools or institutions maintained by Voluntary Managers, the Board pay to the Authorities a 50% grant on their net expenditure in respect of tuition, or, in the case of residential schools or institutions, in respect of tuition and maintenance.

In the case of pupils sent by Boards of Guardians, by bodies other than Local Education Authorities, or by private persons, to schools or institutions under voluntary managment grant at the following rates is payable by the Board to the Managers:—

£8 10 0 per annum per unit of average attendance in a Day School.

£16 10 0 per annum per unit of average attendance in a Boarding School.

Local Education Authorities are also empowered to grant maintenance allowances to Blind Students attending Institutions of Higher Education as day scholars subject to the conditions of the Board of Education Maintenance Allowance Regulations, Grant Regulations No. 14.

APPENDIX 2.

List of Voluntary Agencies for the Blind to whom grant is paid by the Ministry of Health in respect of services under the Regulations governing grants in aid of the Welfare of the Blind.

The list is arranged alphabetically under Counties, and Counties Associations are placed under the name of the place of their offices.

The addresses given are those of the Secretaries.

The letter after the name of each County shows under which of the Counties Associations it is grouped, thus:—N., Northern Counties Association; E., Eastern; M.L., Metropolitan and Adjacent Counties Association (London Branch); M.C., Metropolitan and Adjacent Counties Association (Home Counties Branch); W., Western; M., Midland; S.W., South Wales and Monmouth; N.W., North Western.

England (except Monmouthshire).

Bedfordshire (E.).
Luton.—South Beds. Society for the Blind (21/23, Williamson Street).
Bedford.—North Beds. Society for the Blind (43, St. Cuthberts).

Berkshire (M.C.).
Reading.—Reading Association for the Welfare of the Blind (1, Belle Avenue).
Berkshire County Blind Society (Kentons, Tilehurst Road).

Buckinghamshire (M.).
Aylesbury.—Buckinghamshire Association for the Blind. (23, Walton Street).

Cambridgeshire (E.).
Cambridge.—Cambridge Society for the Blind (5, Emmanuel Street).

Cheshire (N.W., but Wirral is N.).
Chester.—North-Western Counties Association for the Blind (33, Halkyn Road, Hoole).
Society for the Home Teaching of the Blind (33, Halkyn Road, Hoole).
Macclesfield.—Society for the Home Teaching of the Blind (Thornley, Ryles Park).
Stockport.—Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb ((St. Petersgate)

Cumberland (N.).
Carlisle.—Carlisle and Cumberland Workshops and Home Teaching Society for the Blind (Lonsdale Street).

Devonshire (W.).
Devonport.—Devonport and Western Counties Association for the Blind (Manor Lodge).
Exeter.—West of England Institution for the Blind (St. David's Hill, Exeter).
Newton Abbot.—Devon and Exeter County Association for the Blind (Bernstein).
Western Counties Association for the Blind ("Garston," Knowles Hill).
Plymouth.—S. Devon and Cornwall Institution for the Instruction and Employment of the Blind (North Hill).

Dorset (W.).
Dorchester.—Dorset County Association for the Blind (Ballinard, Queen's Avenue).

Durham (N.).

Darlington.—Darlington Blind Welfare and Home Teaching Society (Town Clerk's Office, Houndgate).

Middlesbrough.—Cleveland and South Durham Workshops for the Blind (59, Grange Road West).

South Shields.—South Shields Institution for the Blind (11, Keppel Street).

Sunderland.—Sunderland and Durham County Royal Institute for the Blind (23 and 24, Villiers Street).

W. Hartlepool.—Hartlepools' Workshops for the Welfare and Training of the Blind (11, Stanhope Avenue).

Essex (M.C.).

Colchester.—Colchester Home Teaching Society (87, East Hill).

Essex Voluntary Association (16, Union Court, Broad Street, London E.C.1).

Gloucestershire (W.).

Bristol.—Royal Blind Asylum Workshop (Museum Avenue, Park Street).

Cheltenham.—Cheltenham Workshops for the Blind (51, Winchcombe Street).

Avening.—Gloucestershire County Association for the Blind (Cherington Rectory).

Herefordshire (M.).

Hereford.—Herefordshire County Association for the Blind (High View, Ryeland Street).

Hertfordshire (M.C.).

Broxbourne.—Hertfordshire Association for the Blind (Wormley Lodge).

Huntingdonshire (E.).

Huntingdon.—Huntingdonshire Society for the Blind (68, High Street).

Isle of Ely (E.).

March.—Isle of Ely Society for the Blind (County Hall).

Isle of Wight (M.C.).

Carisbrooke.—Isle of Wight Society for the Benefit of the Indigent Blind (Castle Crag).

Kent (M.C.).

Sittingbourne.—Kent County Association for the Blind (1, Crescent Street).

Tunbridge Wells.—Workshop for the Blind (63, Calverley Road).

Lancashire (N).

Accrington.—Institution for the Blind and Prevention of Blindness (32, Bank Street).

Ashton-under-Lyne.—Ashton-under-Lyne, etc., Home Teaching for the Blind (7, Cobden Street).

Bacup.—Rossendale Society for Visiting and Instructing the Blind (Holmes Villa).

Barrow-in-Furness.—Barrow and District Society for the Blind (7, Hibbert Road).

Blackburn.—Blackburn and District Workshops for the Blind (Thornber Street).

Blackpool.—Blackpool and Fylde Society for the Blind (Tramway's Depot, Marton Street).

Bolton.—Workshops and Homes for the Blind (Marsden Road).

Burnley.—Burnley Home Teaching and General Help Society for the Blind (Tarleton House).

Bury.—Bury and District Civilian Blind Committee (9, Broad Street).

Colne.—Colne Blind Prevention and Aid Society (The Grove).
Liverpool.—Liverpool Catholic Blind Asylum (59, Brunswick Road).
Liverpool School for the Indigent Blind (Hardman Street).
Liverpool Workshops and Home Teaching, etc., for the Blind (Cornwallis Street).
Manchester.—Henshaw's Institution for the Blind (Old Trafford).
Manchester and Salford Blind Aid Society (30, Tonman Street, Deansgate).
Northern Counties Association for the Blind (70a, Market Street).
Oldham.—Workshops for the Blind (New Radcliffe Street).
Oldham Home Teaching Society for the Blind (94, Oxford Street).
Preston.—Preston Industrial Institute for the Blind (Fulwood).
Rochdale.—Rochdale and District Society for Visiting and Instructing Blind (435, Bury Road).
St. Helens.—St. Helens and District Society for the Blind (70, Bickerstaffe Street).
Warrington.—Warrington, Widnes and District Society for the Blind (4, Museum Street).
Wigan.—Wigan Workshop for the Blind (Millgate).

Leicestershire (M.).
Leicester.—Leicestershire and Rutland Incorporated Institute for Blind (50, Granby Street).
Wycliffe Society for Helping the Blind (Victoria Hall, Mill Hill Lane).

Lincolnshire (E.).
Boston.—Boston and Holland Blind Society (10, Sleaford Road).
Grantham.—Kesteven (Lincs.) Blind Society (Carlton Scroop Manor).
Grimsby.—Grimsby Society for the Blind (170, Victoria Street).
Lincoln.—Eastern Counties Association for the Blind (1a, Bailgate).
Lincoln Blind Society (Y.M.C.A., Guildhall Street).
Lindsey Blind Society (Y.M.C.A., Guildhall Street).

London (M.L.).
Barclay Workshops for Blind Women (21, Crawford Street, W.1).
Blind Employment Factory (246, Waterloo Road, S.E.1. Head Office—Highlands Road, Leatherhead).
British and Foreign Bible Society (146, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4).
Cecilia Home for Blind Women (111, Abbey Road, N.W.8).
College of Teachers of the Blind (c/o, 224–8, Gt. Portland Street, W.1).
Incorporated Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind (257, 258, Tottenham Court Road, W.1).
Indigent Blind Visiting Society (8, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).
London Association for the Blind (Rosedale House, 144a, Warwick Street, S.W.1).
London Society for Teaching and Training the Blind (Swiss Cottage, Hampstead, N.W.3).
Metropolitan and Adjacent Counties Association for the Blind (London) (Denison House, 296, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1).
Metropolitan and Adjacent Counties Association for the Blind (Home Counties) (2, Deans Yard, Westminster, S.W.1)
National Institute for the Blind (224–8, Gt. Portland Street, W.1).
National Library for the Blind (35, Great Smith Street, S.W.1).
North London Homes for Aged Christian Blind Men and Women (77, Hanley Road, Crouch Hill, N.4).
Royal Association in Aid of the Deaf and Dumb, (413, Oxford Street, W.1).

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (Northumberland Avenue, W.C.).
Turner House Hostel (Church Army) (57, Bryanston Street, Marble Arch, W.1).
Workshops for Blind of Kent (49, London Street, Greenwich, S.E.10).

Middlesex (M.C.).
Middlesex Association for the Blind (2, Dean's Yard, London, S.W.1).

Norfolk (E.).
Norwich.—Institution for the Indigent Blind (132, Magdalen Street).

Northamptonshire (M.).
Northampton.—Northamptonshire (Town and County) Association for the Blind (15, Guildhall Road).

Northumberland (N.).
Newcastle-on-Tyne.—Newcastle and Gateshead, etc., Home Teaching Society for Blind (149, Pilgrim Street).
Workshops for the Adult Blind (Breamish Street).
North Shields.—Tynemouth Blind Welfare Society (45, Bedford Street).

Nottinghamshire (M.).
Nottingham.—Royal Midland Institution for the Blind (Chaucer Street).

Oxfordshire (M.).
Oxford.—Oxford Society for the Blind (23, Leckford Road).
MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND (23, Leckford Road).

Soke of Peterborough (M.).
Peterborough.—Peterborough Association for the Blind (234, Eastfield Road).

Shropshire (M.).
Shrewsbury.—Shropshire County Association for the Blind (134, Abbey Foregate).

Somerset (W.).
Bath.—Bath Home Teaching Society for the Blind (9, Cavendish Crescent).
Bridgwater.—Somerset County Association for the Blind (Huntworth House).

Southampton (M.C.).
Bournemouth.—Bournemouth and District Blind Aid Society (30, Wimborne Road).
Southampton.—Southampton Association for the Blind (7, Blenheim Chambers, The Junction, Above Bar).
Winchester.—Hampshire Association for the Care of the Blind (The Castle).

Staffordshire (M.).
Hanley.—Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffs. Workshops and Welfare Committee for the Blind (Victoria Road, Shelton).
Uttoxeter.—Staffordshire Association for the Blind (Ingleneuk, 21, New Road).
Walsall.—Walsall, Wednesbury and District Society for the Blind (139, Lichfield Street).
Wolverhampton.—Wolverhampton, Dudley and Districts Society for the Blind (Douro House, 62, Waterloo Road).

Suffolk (E.).
Ipswich.—E. Suffolk and Ipswich Association for the Blind (55, St. Matthew's Street).

Surrey (M.C.).
Croydon.—Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind (Eldon House, Wellesley Road).
Leatherhead.—Royal School for the Indigent Blind (Highlands Road).

Sussex (M.C.).
Brighton.—Barclay Home and School for Blind and Partially Blind Girls (Wellington Road).
Brighton Society for the Welfare of the Blind (Rooms 53 and 54, Prudential Buildings, North Street).
Lewes.—East Sussex County Association for the Blind (Falkland House).
St. Leonards.—Hastings Voluntary Association for the Blind (6, The Uplands).
West Worthing.—W. Sussex County Association for the Blind (32, Downview Road).

Warwickshire (M.).
Birmingham.—Royal Institution for the Blind (Carpenter Road, Edgbaston).
Coventry.—Coventry Society for the Blind (Thanet House, St. Patrick's Road).
Warwick.—Warwickshire Association for the Blind (Guys Cliffe).

Wiltshire (W.).
Upton Lovell.—Wilts. County Association for the Care of the Blind (Corton).

Worcestershire (M.).
Stourbridge.—Workshops for the Blind (Bank Street).
Worcester.—Worcester Association for the Blind (Sunningdale, Battenhall Road).

Yorkshire, East Riding (N.).
Kingston-upon-Hull.—Hull and East Riding Blind Institute (Beech Holme, Beverley Road).
York.—Yorkshire School for Blind (3, Blake Street).

Yorkshire, West Riding (N.).
Barnsley.—Barnsley Association for Visiting and Teaching the Blind (7, Bond Street).
Bradford.—Royal Institution for the Blind (Frizinghall).
Dewsbury.—Institution for the Blind of Dewsbury, Batley and District (Daisy Hill).
Doncaster.—Doncaster and District Home Teaching Society for the Blind (Briarcliffe).
Halifax.—Halifax Society for the Blind (Skircoat Moor Road, Savile Park).
Harrogate.—Harrogate and District Society for the Blind, (9, Spring Grove).
Huddersfield.—Huddersfield and District Blind Society (18, Ramsden Street).
Keighley.—Keighley Institution for the Blind (13, Scott Street).
Leeds.—Incorporated Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb (Albion Street).
Sheffield.—Sheffield Institution for the Blind (West Street).
Wakefield.—Wakefield Institution for the Blind (19, Queen Street).

Wales and Monmouthshire.

Carnarvonshire (N.W.).
Bangor.—North Wales Home Teaching Society for the Blind (54, College Road).

Glamorganshire (S.W.).

Cardiff.—South Wales and Monmouthshire. Counties Association for the Blind (13, St. Andrew's Crescent).

Cardiff Institute for the Blind (Longcross Street).

Dowlais.—Merthyr Tydfil Institution for the Blind (53, Gwladys Street, Pant).

Llwynypia—Rhondda Institution for the Blind (Pontrhondda Road).

Pontypridd.—Pontypridd and District Institution for the Blind (22, Wood Road).

Swansea.—Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind (Northampton Place).

Glynn Vivian Home of Rest for the Blind (Mumbles).

Monmouthshire (S.W.).

Newport.—Newport and Monmouth Blind Aid Society (199, Chepstow Road).

Note.—In addition to the above there are a large number of Societies providing pensions for the Blind. Reference may be made for these to a Handbook published by the Gardner Trust for the Blind, 53, Victoria Street, London, S.W. 1.

Enquiries as to any Agencies not included above should be addressed to the Counties Association of the area.

For educational Institutions, *see* note on p. 7.

APPENDIX 3.

The three Scales of Augmentation of the Earnings of Blind Employees in Workshops recommended by the Advisory Committee.

(1) *Scale* 1.

This was recommended in the Advisory Committee's First Report (1918–1919), page 9.

"A fixed sum of 15*s.* a week should be given by way of augmentation to all workshop employees earning up to 5*s.* a week at Trade Union or other standard rates of pay, and that where over 5*s.* a week is earned the augmentation should be reduced by 4*d.* in the 1*s.* for every 1*s.* earned over 5*s.*"

(2) *Scale* 2.

In the light of further experience, the Advisory Committee in their Third Report for 1921–1922, page 9, recommended that the wages of workshop employees should be augmented on a sliding scale providing for a maximum grant of 15*s.* a week on earnings up to 10*s.* a week, at standard rates of pay, decreasing by 3*d.* in the 1*s.* to a minimum of 5*s.* a week augmentation where the wages are 50*s.* a week or more. The Ministry of Health recommended this scale to the consideration of Local Authorities in Memorandum 64/B.D. issued in March, 1922.

(3) *Scale* 3.

The Advisory Committee, finding that Scale 2 had not been very generally adopted, and with a view to the promotion of a greater degree of uniformity, recommended the following scale in their Sixth Report for 1924–1926, page 15.

"An augmentation allowance of 15*s.* a week should be made on all earnings up to 16*s.* a week, with deductions of 1*d.* in the 1*s.* for earnings between 16*s.* and 20*s.*, 2*d.* in the 1*s.* for earnings from 20*s.* to 30*s.*, and 3*d.* in the 1*s.* for all earnings over 30*s.* subject to a fixed augmentation allowance of 6*s.* 9*d.* for all earnings over 55*s.* a week. All deductions to run concurrently."

APPENDIX 4.

Old Age Pensions for the Blind.

1. Section 1 of the Blind Persons Act, 1920, provides that the Old Age Pensions Acts shall apply to all persons who are so blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential at the age of 50 instead of the age of 70. The Old Age Pensions Act, 1908, 1911, 1919 and 1924, therefore apply in all respects except as regards age in the case of the blind. The conditions laid down in these Acts require that a blind claimant should satisfy the pension authorities (i) that he has been a British subject for at least 10 years (this does not apply to a woman who would satisfy this condition but for her marriage to an alien); (ii) if he is a natural born British subject, that since attaining the age of 30 he has resided in the United Kingdom for at least 12 years in the aggregate. (If he is not a natural born British subject, he must have resided in the United Kingdom for an aggregate period of at least 20 years), (iii) that his yearly means as calculated under the Acts do not exceed £49 17*s.* 6*d.*

2. *In calculating means* regard must be had not only to property invested or otherwise put to profitable use, or capable of investment or profitable use, and to income in cash, but to the yearly value of any advantage accruing to the claimant from the personal use or enjoyment of property (e.g., a house belonging to the claimant in which he resides), and to the yearly value of any benefit or privilege (such as free board and lodging) enjoyed by the claimant. Means from property, investments. etc., are not calculated on the income actually derived but the capital value of the property is ascertained, and the yearly value is taken to be one-twentieth of the capital value so far as such value exceeds £25, but does not exceed £400, and anything above £400 is taken at one-tenth. *In calculating means an amount not exceeding £39 can be deducted from such part of the claimant's means as is not derived from earnings.*

For example, a blind man, who is single or a widower, earns 10*s* a week and is in receipt of a war pension of 12*s.* 6*d.* a week. His means from earnings are, therefore, £26 a year, and from other sources than earnings, £32 10*s.* The whole of the £32 10*s.* can be deducted in calculating means for pension, and he will be entitled to a full pension of 10*s.* a week, if he is otherwise qualified.

A blind spinster or widow is in receipt of a pension from a voluntary society of 15*s.* a week, i.e., £39 a year, and earns 10s. a week, i.e., £26 a year. In addition she has invested savings the yearly value of which, calculated as above, is £23. Her total means, therefore, are £88. Her means for pension purposes will be £88 less £39 (which are not derived from earnings), viz., £49. Her pension, therefore (*see* paragraph 3), will be 1*s.* a week, if she is otherwise qualified.

A blind man married to a sighted wife is in receipt of an allowance from a former employer of £1 a week, and he owns and occupies a house, of which the net Schedule A assessment is £30 a year. His wife earns 15*s.* a week. The total means are, therefore, £121, of which £82 is unearned. Of this £82, £39 can be deducted in respect of husband and wife, respectively, i.e., £78 in all. Net means for pension £121 less £78 = £43 divided by two = £21 10*s.* Therefore the man is entitled to a full pension of 10*s.* a week.

3. *The scales of pension* are as follows :—Where the means calculated as above do not exceed £26 5*s.* pension 10*s.*; from £26 5*s.* 1*d.* to £31 10*s.*, pension 8*s.*; from £31 10*s.* 1*d.* to £36 15*s.*, pension 6*s.*; from £36 15*s.* 1*d.* to £42, pension 4*s*; from £42 0*s.* 1*d.* to £47 5*s.*, pension 2*s.*; from £47 5*s.* 1*d.* to £49 17*s.* 6*d.*, pension 1*s.*; above £49 17*s.* 6*d.*, no pension.

4. *Method of obtaining pension.*—The nearest post office will supply the claimant with a form of claim, which on completion should be posted to the address printed on the form. The claim may be made at any time, not more than four months before the claimant attains 50. The claim, when received, will be referred to the local Pension Officer, and, after he has reported on it, will be decided by the local Pension Committee. It is open either to the Pension Officer or the claimant to appeal within 7 days of the receipt of the Committee's decision, to the Minister of Health. The Minister may, if he considers the circumstances special, entertain an appeal up to 14 days but not later.

5. *Evidence of blindness.*—If a claimant possesses any written evidence of blindness he should not send it with his claim but should be prepared to produce it to the Pension Officer on request. It is not necessary that he should obtain evidence himself. It he is a registered blind person, the Pension Officer will ask the local Voluntary Agency for the Blind to certify that he is known to the Society "as being so blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential." If the question of blindness arises on an appeal the Ministry will, if necessary, make arrangements for the claimant to be examined by a Regional Medical Officer of the Ministry. A case of special difficulty may be referred by the Ministry to an ophthalmic surgeon, to whom the Department pay any necessary fees, but this is the only case in which the Department bear the cost of a medical certification of blindness.

6. An explanatory leaflet on Old Age Pensions (Leaflet D) can be obtained from any Post Office.

APPENDIX 5.

National Health and Pensions Insurance.

1. The National Health Insurance and Pensions Schemes embrace in general persons between the ages of 16 and 70 (65 as from 2nd January, 1928), employed under a contract of service or as out-workers, the most important exception being persons engaged in non-manual employment remunerated at over £250 a year. Insurance is ordinarily effected through membership of an Approved Society, where possible, otherwise through the Deposit Contributors Fund.

2. Persons who have been compulsorily insured for at least 2 years may, on ceasing work, continue in insurance as voluntary contributors.

3. Normally, the rate of contribution is 1*s.* 6*d.* a week for a man, and 1*s.* 1*d.* a week for a woman, of which 9*d.* and 7*d.*, respectively, are paid by the employer.

4. The benefits provided, subject to certain qualifying and other conditions, are:—

National Health Insurance.

(*a*) Medical Benefit. Free medical attendance and treatment, and all necessary medicines.

(*b*) Sickness Benefit (normally men 15*s.* and women 12*s.* a week), maximum period 26 weeks, and

(*c*) Disablement Benefit (normally 7*s.* 6*d.* a week), payable when sickness benefit is exhausted (*see* paragraph 5 below).

(*d*) Maternity Benefit (40*s.*)

(*e*) Additional Benefits (the most common of which are payments for dental and ophthalmic treatment and increases in the rates of cash benefits) provided by Approved Societies having a disposable surplus on valuation.

Pensions.

(*a*) Widows' and Orphans' Pensions.

(*b*) Old Age Pensions at 65 as from 2nd January, 1928, (men and women 10*s.* a week). A Blind Old Age Pension will not be affected by the payment of this Pension.

5. Sickness and Disablement Benefits are payable during periods of incapacity for remunerative work. Blindness is not in itself necessarily ground for payment of benefit. Thus, blind persons who have, after training, become fit for some form of remunerative occupation would not ordinarily be entitled to benefit. A blind person who is unfit for, and untrainable for, any form of remunerative work would, on the other hand, generally be eligible for benefit; Approved Societies would not as a rule regard him as debarred from benefit solely because he might undertake some simple occupation purely as a pastime and to occupy his mind. The decision as to payment of benefit in individual cases rests with the Approved Society, subject to the insured person's right of appeal. Workers for the Blind can most effectively assist them in health insurance claims by placing their Approved Societies in possession of the facts. In case of difficulty the local (Insurance Department) Inspector of the Ministry of Health may be consulted.

6. Further information as to National Health and Pensions Insurance will be found in Leaflet 31 (Health) and Pamphlet 1 (Pensions), copies of which are obtainable from the Ministry of Health.

APPENDIX 6.

Summary of Official Publications helpful to Workers among the Blind.

(1) *Publications relating to the Welfare of the Blind.*

Circular and Regulations of the Ministry of Health governing Grants in aid of the Welfare of the Blind, dated 7th August, 1919. 3*d.* net.
Blind Persons Act, 1920. 1*d.* net.
Charities for the Blind; Regulations made by the Charity Commissioners and approved by the Minister of Health, 10th September, 1920, under the Blind Persons Act. 3*d.* net.
Memorandum as to what Schemes of Local Authorities under Section 2 of the Blind Persons Act, should contain. Memo. 27 B/D. 2*d.* net.
Model Form of Accounts for Approved Blind Agencies, dated 21st December, 1921. Circular 262. 3*d.* net.
Memorandum on Augmentation of Wages and Registration of Blind Persons and the Provision of Employment, dated 31st March, 1922. Memo. 64 B/D. 2*d.* net.
Circular relative to Co-operation between Training and Employing Agencies with regard to Blind Persons, dated 24th April, 1923. Circular 387. 1*d.* net.
Circular relative to the Definition of Blindness and Training and Employment of the Blind, dated 29th March, 1926. Circular 681. 2*d.* net.
Wireless Telegraphy Blind Persons (Facilities) Act, 1926. 1*d.* net.
Circular referring to Circular 681, and removing misunderstandings which had arisen as to the definition of blindness, dated 27th April, 1927. Circular 780. 1*d.* net.

(2) *Reports of the Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind.*

1st Report, 1918–19. 9*d.* net.
2nd Report, 1919–20, 6*d.* net.
3rd Report, 1921–22. 6*d.* net.
4th Report, 1922–23. 6*d.* net.
5th Report, 1923–24. 6*d.* net.
6th Report, 1924–26. 9*d.* net.

(3) *Blind Old Age Pensions.*

Summary of the Law and Regulations relative to Old Age Pensions and Blind Persons; Leaflet D (obtainable free from any Post Office).

(4) *National Health and Pensions Insurance.*

Leaflet on National Health Insurance, Leaflet 31 (Health).
Pamphlet on the duties of Employers in National Health and Pensions Insurance, Pamphlet A.
Pamphlet on Pensions Insurance: Pamphlet 1 (Pensions).
(These are obtainable free from the Ministry of Health).
Approved Societies Handbook. 1*s.* 6*d.* net.

(5) *Unemployment Insurance.*

Summary of the Unemployment Insurance Acts, 1920–25: Leaflet U.I.L.4.
Leaflet as to Claims for and Conditions of Benefit: Leaflet U.I.L.8.
(These are obtainable free at any Employment Exchange or at the Ministry of Labour.)

(6) *Training and Education.*

Board of Education (Special Services) Regulations, No. 19, 1925. 4*d.* net.
List of Certified Special Schools and Recognised Institutions for the Training of Blind and other Defective Students, and Nursery Schools in England and Wales; List 42. 1*s.* net.

(7) *Causes and Prevention of Blindness.*

Departmental Committee's Report on. 1922. 4*s.* net.

Except where otherwise stated copies of the above may be purchased directly from H.M. Stationery Office, at the following addresses: Adastral House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; York Street, Manchester; 1, St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff; or through any bookseller.

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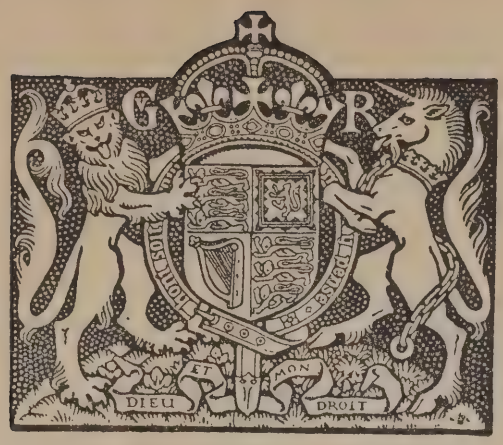
By Wyman & Sons, Limited, Fetter Lane, London, E.C. 4.

8/27. (1598) Wt. 16518—1053. 1,000. 11/27. Wy. & S., Ltd. Gp. 2.



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND

HANDBOOK

ON THE

WELFARE OF THE BLIND

IN ENGLAND AND WALES

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.
To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses:
Adastral House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 120, George Street, Edinburgh;
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1927

Price 6*d*. Net.

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PREFACE.

I am pleased to accede to the request of the Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind that I should write a few words of introduction to this Handbook, which has been prepared by the Committee for the guidance of those engaged in work for the benefit of blind persons.

The Blind Persons Act, which was passed in 1920, recognised that blind persons have a special claim upon the community, and that claim is being met in most parts of the country by a willing partnership between the Local Authorities and numerous voluntary agencies, under the supervision of the Ministry of Health. The expenditure out of public funds, and from voluntary sources for the welfare of the blind, is some measure of the progress that is being made, and it is satisfactory to note that, in spite of financial stringency, the amount devoted to this purpose continues year by year to increase.

The Handbook gives an attractive and sympathetic account of the principles which have been found most effective in helping the blind, and of the way in which they have been carried out in practice. I believe it will not only prove valuable to those who are already engaged in the work, but that it will make a wide appeal to the public, who have always demonstrated their sympathy with those deprived of sight, and some of whom may perhaps be induced, after perusing this book, to offer their services in one of the many ways in which they will be welcome.

NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN.

20*th July*, 1927.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND.

1. AIM OF THE HANDBOOK.

The aim of this handbook is not primarily to stimulate interest in, or to arouse sympathy for the blind. It starts with the assumption that this interest and sympathy already exist, and that the reader wishes to learn how they can be applied in practice. Its aim therefore is to state briefly the facts as to blindness in England and Wales, to outline the history of the growth of methods for assisting the blind and the legislation on the subject, to analyse the various categories of the blind and describe the differing methods of help available for each category, to set out the system of organisation, both official and voluntary, which is responsible at the present time for the Welfare of the Blind, and to refer to the powers that exist for the prevention of blindness. Appendices are added giving (1) a summary of the grants payable for the blind by the Ministry of Health and Board of Education, (2) the names of grant-aided Voluntary Agencies, with the addresses of the Secretaries, (3) the scales of augmentation for blind employees in Workshops recommended by the Advisory Committee, (4) a note on Old Age Pensions for the blind, (5) a note on National Health Insurance and Widows, Orphans and Old Age Contributory Pensions, and (6) a summary of official publications.

It is hoped that the handbook may be useful for those already engaged in the work, and, still more, that it may serve to guide potential helpers into channels for which they feel fitted, and in which they can most usefully render service.

2. FACTS AS TO BLINDNESS.

(*a*) Definition of Blindness.

There are two statutory definitions of blindness in this country. (1) Part V of the Education Act, 1921, re-enacts the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893, and provides that a blind child shall receive instruction suitable to such a child. In Section 69 of this Act "blind" is defined as meaning "too blind to be able to read the ordinary school books used by children." (2) Section 1 of the Blind Persons' Act, 1920, defines a blind person as one who is "so blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential." The Regulations of the Ministry of Health, under which grants are given for the Welfare of the Blind,

define a blind person as one who is "too blind to perform work for which eyesight is essential." This definition is for all practical purposes identical with that given in the Blind Persons Act. It will be seen that these definitions include many persons other than those totally blind, but that the educational definition, which is largely preventive in its purpose, is much wider than the others. Difficulties arise from this difference because a child who, quite properly, has been educated in a school for the blind may not be sufficiently blind to become eligible for the grants and benefits which are available to those who are blind within the definition contained in the Blind Persons Act and the Ministry's Regulations. The Ministry of Health in Circulars 681 and 780 explained the principles which they adopt in deciding whether a person is too blind to perform work for which eyesight is essential. Briefly, only visual factors can be taken into account and other bodily or mental infirmities should be disregarded. Where the acuity of vision (refractive error being corrected) is below $\frac{1}{20}$th of the normal ($\frac{3}{60}$ths Snellen), the person may usually be regarded as blind. Where the acuity is better than $\frac{6}{60}$ths (Snellen), the presumption is that the person is not blind unless there are such counterbalancing visual conditions as great contraction of the field of vision, marked nystagmus, &c. The test to be applied is not whether a person is unable to pursue his ordinary occupation, or any particular occupation, but whether he is too blind to perform work for which eyesight is essential.

The problem of the partially sighted, such as high myopes, is a difficult one, but it cannot be dealt with under the Blind Persons Act, though provision can be, and is, made for the education and, in some cases, for the vocational training of myopic children and young persons under the Education Act.

(*b*) The Register and Statistics.

All schemes under the Blind Persons Act, 1920, provide for the keeping of a register of the blind within each area, and statistics with regard to blindness are obtained from these registers.

The latest return of the numbers of blind persons was extracted from these registers on the 31st March, 1927. The total number in England and Wales was 46,822, as compared with 42,140 at the 31st March, 1925, 36,518 at the 30th June, 1923, and 34,894 at the 1st April, 1921. There is good reason to believe that the increase shown by these figures is due, not to an increase in the total number of blind persons, but to an increasing completeness in their registration. Full particulars of the return at the 31st March, 1925, are set out in the Appendix to the Sixth Report of the Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind and particulars of the figures for 1927 will be published in a later report. In 1927 there were 44,010 blind over 16 years of age. Of these 9,160 were employed; 635 trained but unemployed; 1,704 under training; 844

not under training but trainable, and 31,667 unemployable. Over 67·6 per cent., therefore, of the total number of the blind in England and Wales are classed as unemployable. The distribution of blindness according to age periods was as follows: 0–5, 258; 5–16, 2,554; 16–21, 1,670; 21–30, 3,162; 30–40, 4,474; 40–50, 5,331; 50–60, 7,495; 60–70, 9,737; over 70, 11,958; unknown, 183.

In the past, one of the most frequent causes of blindness was disease within a few days of birth. The success of the campaign against Ophthalmia Neonatorum is steadily reducing blindness from this cause, and consequently, while it may be hoped that the total amount of blindness will diminish, an increase in the proportion of blindness in the higher ages of life may be expected.

As the Advisory Committee state in their Fifth Annual Report, adequate and accurate statistical information as to the classification of the blind is a pre-requisite of efficient service, and the importance of an accurate and complete register is very great.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND.

The earliest known public institution established for the blind is supposed to be the Hospice des Quinze-Vingts in Paris, founded by St Louis in 1260, principally for soldiers who had lost their sight in war. From time to time many charitable benefactors have left bequests for the welfare of blind persons. The Royal Commission of 1889 reported that the interest of the invested funds left by various charitable persons for provision for the blind amounted to over £35,000 annually. Voluntary effort on an organised scale appears to have originated in 1784 when Valentin Haüy founded L'Institution Nationale des Jeunes Aveugles in Paris, the first school for the blind opened in Europe. In 1790 the first institution of the kind in this country was established at Liverpool by Edward Rushton, who lost his own sight during a voyage in tending a cargo of negro slaves who were stricken with malignant ophthalmia. This Institution still continues at Hardman Street, Liverpool. It was speedily followed by a Blind Asylum at Edinburgh, in 1793 the school at Bristol was founded, and in 1799 St. George's School in London, which is now the Royal School at Leatherhead, and the Waterloo Road workshops. These were the first of a long line of charitable endeavour for the blind in this country.

Louis Braille, who was born in 1809, and was blinded at the age of five, worked on a system of embossed writing invented by a French artillery officer named Barbier and perfected his own system based on the six points in 1829. This has become the standard system of embossed writing and printing for the blind. Another system easier to learn, but not so compact, was invented by Dr. Moon, who was born in 1818, while Mr. H. M. Taylor, F.R.S. of Trinity College, Cambridge, invented the mathematical and chemical

formulæ which make it possible to produce scientific text books in Braille. Another Mr. Taylor invented the Taylor slate used for teaching arithmetic and algebra in all schools for the blind.

The earliest legislation in England* concerning the blind was the Poor Law of Queen Elizabeth of 1601, which laid the duty of relieving and maintaining destitute persons, including blind persons, upon their relatives, and where such failed upon the Overseers.

Apart from various statutes requiring Boards of Guardians to send children to special schools and to arrange for the education of blind adults, the first State action was taken in 1885, when a Royal Commission was appointed to consider the condition and education of the blind and of the deaf and dumb. The Commission reported in 1889, and its Report resulted in the passing of the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893, which provided for the compulsory attendance at school of all blind children between the ages of 5 and 16, and for the provision of special schools for their education. The Education Act of 1902 empowered Education Authorities to make provision for further education including that of the blind over 16.

Recent developments in Great Britain may be said to spring from a debate in the House of Commons on 11th March, 1914, when Mr. Wardle moved a resolution, which was carried without a division, " that in the opinion of this House, the present system of Voluntary effort in aid of the Blind People of this Country does not adequately meet their necessities, and that the State should make provision whereby capable Blind People might be made industrially self-supporting, and the incapable and infirm maintained in a proper and humane manner." Within two months of this debate a Departmental Committee was appointed " to consider the present condition of the blind in the United Kingdom, and the means available for (*a*) their industrial or professional training, and (*b*) their assistance, and to make recommendations." This Committee reported in 1917, and in December of that year, in accordance with one of their recommendations, an Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind was appointed by the President of the Local Government Board. The six reports published by this Advisory Committee from time to time give a full description of what has been and is being done for the Welfare of the Blind in recent years.

On the 7th August, 1919, the Ministry of Health issued regulations and rules governing grants out of public moneys to be distributed in aid of certain services carried on for the benefit of the blind, and with these grants began a great development in the work. These public moneys are voted annually by Parliament as part of the vote of the Ministry of Health. Appendix I summarises these grants.

**Note.*—Reference may be made to a chapter entitled " The Blind and Legislation " in the " Handbook for Home Teachers of the Blind," published by the National Institute.

In 1920 the Blind Persons Act was passed. This provides in Section 1 for the grant of Old Age Pensions to blind persons at the age of 50 instead of at the age of 70 (*see* Appendix 4). Section 2 imposes a duty on the Council of each County and County Borough to make arrangements, to the satisfaction of the Minister of Health, for promoting the Welfare of Blind persons ordinarily resident within their area, and to submit to the Minister a scheme for the exercise of their powers under the Act. They are given power to provide and maintain or contribute towards the provision and maintenance of workshops, hostels, homes, or other places for the reception of blind persons, whether within or without their area, and, with the approval of the Minister of Health, to do such other things as may appear to them desirable for the purpose. Section 3 provides for the registration of charities for the blind, and has been useful in extinguishing some undesirable charities.

4. SCHEMES UNDER THE BLIND PERSONS ACT, 1920.

All the 146 Councils of Counties and County Boroughs in England and Wales, who are the Local Authorities under the Blind Persons Act, except the Council of one recently constituted County Borough, have made schemes under the Act. The Ministry of Health indicated in memorandum 27/BD the lines on which schemes should be drawn. These schemes vary in detail, but a comprehensive scheme usually makes provision for the following matters :—

(*a*) Children under School Age. (*b*) Education and Training of (i) Children, and (ii) Young Persons and Adults. (*c*) Employment (i) in Workshops, (ii) by means of Home Workers' Schemes. (*d*) Hostels for Blind Workers. (*e*) Homes. (*f*) Unemployable Blind. (*g*) Home Teaching. (*h*) Registration.

The scheme usually records that the Local Education Authority will deal with education and training, and normally provides for the carrying out of other services (*e.g.*, Workshops, Home Workers, Home Teaching, or Registration), by one or more Voluntary Agencies working in the area of the Local Authority.

5. CLASSIFICATION OF THE BLIND.

No useful work can be done for the blind so long as they are all lumped into one undifferentiated class. The blind differ from one another as much as do the sighted, in temperament, intelligence, ability and power of concentration.

There is no simple formula for service to the blind. Every "case" is an individual with an individual's own peculiar gifts and failings, and the best work is done by those who study with most accuracy and sympathy the blind person whom they are trying to help. In its broadest form no one would question this, for obviously, the appropriate methods must differ in helping a blind baby, a girl just leaving the elementary school, a trained man of 25, or a

woman of 70. But it is true also in subtler ways. Should this clever boy be encouraged to go to Worcester College, and subsequently to the University, or is it wiser to play for safety and train him to a manual occupation in which he can count on employment? Has this girl a gift for music so deep and real that it will brave and overcome the disappointments of an overcrowded career? Is the mental dulness of this third child really mental deficiency, or only the result of neglect by unwise, indulgent or unsympathetic parents? In these examples, and a hundred others, the power to give real help, and to avoid disastrous mistakes, will depend on a sympathetic but penetrating diagnosis of each "case" as it arises.

This variety in the needs of the blind has its counterpart in the variety of gifts which can be brought to the help of the blind. The doctor can help to preserve a remnant of sight; the teacher can train blind children in special ways appropriate to their defect, the Home Teacher and Visitor can bring comfort and happiness into the homes and, by teaching Braille or simple pastime occupations, can give employment to brain and hand and so help to banish the intolerable tedium of an idle blindness; the skilled craftsman can train and encourage blind workmen; the business man can help to organise workshops on a satisfactory trading basis, and can render invaluable help in finding markets for the products of blind labour. It should be easy for any one of goodwill to find opportunity for using his or her special aptitude in the service of the blind.

The main classification of the blind is outlined in the headings of a scheme given in par. 4 above, and may be summarised as follows:—

(*a*) Children under 5 years of age. Par. 6.
(*b*) Children over 5 and under 16. Par. 7.
(*c*) Trainable blind. Par. 8.
(*d*) Employable blind. Pars. 9–13.
(*e*) Unemployable blind. Pars. 15–20.

6. Children under 5 Years of age.

The ordinary service under the Maternity and Child Welfare Act, 1918, is available for blind infants as for sighted infants, and is governed by Regulations dated the 9th August, 1918. Full advantage will, normally, be taken of this service in dealing with blind children under two. Where blind children between the ages of two and five are living under unsatisfactory home conditions, it may be possible for Maternity and Child Welfare Authorities, Local Education Authorities, Boards of Guardians or Voluntary Agencies, to arrange for them to be sent to nursery schools, *e.g.*, the Sunshine Homes established by the National Institute for the Blind, or other special schools certified by the Board of Education for the education of children of these ages. It is obviously in the interests of the child that it should remain at home unless the home conditions are so bad as to necessitate its removal. Advice

can often usefully be given to parents to assist them in the difficult problem of bringing up a blind child.

7. Children over 5 and under 16.

Part V of the Education Act, 1921, which embodies the Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act, 1893, provides for the compulsory education of children too blind to be able to read the ordinary school books used by children, and for the provision of special schools for the purpose of such education.* The responsibility for this work rests on the Local Education Authority for elementary education under the supervision of the Board of Education, who pay grants in aid under the Education Acts.

This provision forms part of the general educational system of the country, but the leaving age for blind children is 16. Children may be, and for the most part are, sent to day or residential schools at the cost of the Local Education Authority, or, in the case of children under the care of the Guardians, at the cost of the Guardians. In the latter case, grant is payable by the Board of Education to the Managers of the schools.

8. The Trainable Blind.

In practically all cases it will be found that further education beyond the age of 16, whether secondary or technical, is essential if a blind person is trainable, and is to be adequately equipped for remunerative employment. The responsibility for this training is placed by the Education Act, 1921 (Section 11 and Part VI), on the Local Education Authority for higher education, viz., a County or County Borough Council. Section 2 (6) of the Blind Persons Act, 1920, provides that the Local Education Authority shall secure adequate and suitable provision for the technical education of blind persons, ordinarily resident in their area, who are capable of receiving and being benefited by such education.

The Board of Education have recognised courses of instruction at a number of training institutions* under Chapter VII of their Special Services Regulations (Grant Regulations No. 19) and pay grants to them under Chapter XI of those Regulations. Alternatively the Local Education Authority for higher education pay fees for the students whom they send to these Institutions, and receive the usual grant for higher education from the Board of Education in respect of this expenditure. A summary of the grants payable by the Board of Education is given in Appendix I.

As with the sighted so with the blind, there always will be some children whose promise justifies their proceeding to secondary

* A list of "Certified Special Schools and Recognized Institutions for the Training of the Blind and other Defective Students, and Nursery Schools in England and Wales," is published by the Board of Education, List 42, price 1/-.

education with a view to a university or professional course. Worcester College provides secondary education for blind boys, and Chorley Wood College for blind girls. It is important, wherever possible, that a career should be mapped out in advance, because of the difficulty of finding employment for those blind persons who are not manual workers. The Royal Normal College at Norwood specialises in the training of blind boys and girls in music, typewriting and piano tuning, and as elementary school teachers. A specialised training in massage is given in the National Institute's School of Massage.

Blind persons in need of manual training fall into two classes, those already blind who have just left the special school, and those who become blind later in life. Experience shows that it is rarely possible to train a blind person for remunerative employment who is over 50 years of age. On the other hand, the memory of a once seen world is a great help to those who become blind. Before incurring the expense and trouble of training, it is most important to be satisfied (*a*) whether the person, when his training is completed, will, or will not, be a blind person within the meaning of the Regulations of the Ministry of Health, which govern grants in respect of employees in Workshops and Home Workers Schemes, because if he is not blind he will not be able to share in the assistance which is limited to the blind, but will have to earn his living in competition with sighted people (Circulars 681 and 780 of the Ministry of Health should be referred to in this connection); (*b*) that the person is likely, as a result of training, to become reasonably proficient, and (*c*) that there are openings for remunerative employment for him at the conclusion of his training.

It follows that there should be the closest possible co-ordination between the training Institutions and the employing Agencies (Workshops and Home Workers Schemes) and equally close co-operation between the Local Education Authority, or other body responsible for the blind person's training, and the Local Authorities who will be responsible for him when his training is over. For this purpose it is important that the training Institution should keep careful progress records of each pupil, shewing in particular his quality of output, speed of execution and independence of working, and that these records should be available for consultation by would-be employers. Constant touch should be kept with the conditions in the various trades so that, in selecting the trade for each student, regard should be had to his personal aptitude for the occupation or trade in which it is proposed to train him, the locality in which he lives, and the prospects of his obtaining remunerative employment there. Many training Institutions endeavour to keep in touch with their old students, and this is of great value.

Much avoidable suffering may be caused to the blind by the neglect of these considerations, and the Ministry of Health, in

consultation with the Board of Education, dealt fully with them in Circular 387 issued on 24th April, 1923.

9. Employable Blind.

It is desirable that wherever possible a blind person should be provided with regular employment, not only because he should, as far as his affliction permits, support himself, but also because lack of occupation and interest is the worst consequence of his disability.

Where a blind person who has been trained for a manual occupation lives within reach of a Workshop for the blind he will normally be employed there, but, where no Workshop is available, arrangements should be made under a Home Workers' Scheme for him to follow his trade as a Home Worker. Where there is a Workshop in the area in which the blind person resides which is also a training centre, the change from training to employment will simply mean the passing from one department to another in the same Institution. If the Workshop has no training department the blind person will have gone to another Institution for his training, on the completion of which he will return to the Workshop in his native town or, if there is no Workshop, into a Home Workers' Scheme.

The non-manual worker is in a different category and must be dealt with separately.

10. *Workshops.*—The management of a Workshop is a complicated business which cannot be discussed in detail in a handbook like this. It involves a selection of trades suitable for the district and constant alertness to find openings for new trades. It demands a continuous search for markets, wholesale or retail, the obtaining of contracts from Local Authorities and others, and possibly the carrying on of a retail shop. A balance has to be struck between a dangerous accumulation of stock and throwing employees out of work, or putting them on short time. Intricate questions arise as to rates of pay, methods of augmentation, sickness, holidays, hours of labour, National Health and Unemployment Insurance.

There are 57 Workshops throughout England and Wales in receipt of grant from the Ministry of Health. Some are large Institutions employing over 100 persons, the largest employs over 180. Others are much smaller, and a number only employ from 10 to 20. While there are some admirable small Workshops, it is obvious that a larger Workshop will be more profitable than a small one. It can afford more skilled supervision and can offer a greater variety of trades to suit the varying capacities of its employees.

The trades usually practised in workshops are, for men :—basket making, mat making, brush making, bedding, upholstery, cabinet making, cane furniture, chair seating and boot repairing. For women.—Hand knitting, round and flat machine-knitting,

light baskets, bedding, chair-seating, wiredrawn brush making, rug making, and, in one or two places, hand-loom-weaving.

The Regulations of the Ministry of Health provide that weekly pay should be " at the Trade Union or other standard rate customary in the particular class of work on which the blind person is employed," and that " the recognised standards of the trade in which the workshop employees are engaged, so far as they relate to rates of pay, bonus, hours of labour and holidays, must be observed by the Agency."

But the handicap of blindness prevents most blind persons from earning a livelihood if they are paid only what they earn on a strictly commercial basis. It is necessary therefore to augment their earnings from sources other than the trading account. It is important to keep these payments by way of augmentation out of the trading account in order that it may clearly show the financial state of the Institution's trading judged on a commerical basis. A variety of methods of augmentation are in use throughout the country. The aims of a sound method should be to encourage individual output and to give help where it is most needed.

Apart from the encouragement to effort which a well-considered scheme of augmentation provides, capacity affects output, and the degree of blindness is an important factor in capacity, particularly in the matter of speed. Other things being equal, a totally blind man will produce less than one who has some measure of sight. For this reason, many schemes of augmentation provide for a scale diminishing as the earnings rise ; in other words, they give most help to those who need it most. The Advisory Committee have suggested three scales of augmentation which are set out in Appendix 3.

11. *Home Workers.*—Where a blind person returns home after his training is completed, and no workshop is within reach, he can carry on his trade at home under a Home Workers' Scheme.

He will need tools and equipment, supervision and technical advice, assistance in obtaining materials and in marketing the goods he produces. For these purposes it is necessary that the Local Authority, or the Voluntary Agency should formulate a proper scheme and obtain the approval of the Ministry of Health. The Ministry will then pay grants in respect of approved Home Workers. It is usually best that such a scheme should be supervised by an Agency which is carrying on a Workshop. It is easier for them to buy a supply of material, to advise and assist in the disposal of goods and to organise helpful supervision by experts in the trade. The Home Worker should be encouraged to find his own market for his goods, but where he is unable to do so he should be assisted by sales of work, garden parties, exhibitions, and other opportunities for the sale of goods made by the blind, which are organised by the supervising Agency. Some Agencies assist in disposing of goods by travelling motor shops.

A well-organised scheme can give help in many ways. One man has been trained to make baskets of a kind for which there is no ready sale near his home. He is brought to headquarters for a short "refresher" course from which he learns to make the special article which is in demand. A woman's knitting machine is out of order and the supervisor visits her and puts it right. A third needs advice as to how to find buyers for her goods. An advertisement helps a fourth. To all, the fact that there is a sympathetic organisation to whom they can refer in difficulty, is a great encouragement. The diffident are encouraged, the unskilful or careless corrected, and the lazy induced to do better. The supervision of Home Workers is often carried out by Home Teachers, but in the larger schemes special supervisors of Home Workers are appointed. Though for the purpose of grant they are classed as Home Teachers they, in fact, specialise in the care of Home Workers, and are skilled in the trades affected.

It is an essential condition of a Home Workers' Scheme that the occupation should not be a mere pastime but should be definitely on the plane of industrial effort. A Home Worker should support himself out of earnings assisted by augmentation like the worker in the Workshop. Accordingly the Ministry of Health define "home-workers" in paragraph 19 of their Grant Regulations as "adult blind persons who, for sufficient reasons, are employed elsewhere than in a workshop in occupations usually practised in workshops and are attached for the purpose of care, assistance and supervision to an approved agency." The Ministry have recognised properly qualified piano tuners as Home Workers but under the definition they are unable to recognise such classes as shopkeepers, dealers, poultry farmers, telephone operators, shorthand typists and the like. They also only pay full grant in respect of men who earn 16s. or over per week and of women who earn 8s. or more, in order to encourage employment on a self-supporting basis.

Augmentation of earnings is, of course, needed for Home Workers, and methods vary.

It will usually be necessary at the outset to provide the Home Worker with a set of tools and sometimes a shed as a workshop. Where the consent of the Ministry has been obtained before the expenditure is incurred, a grant, normally of 50 per cent., is payable.

12. *The Non-Manual Worker.*—Reference has been made on page 8 to the training for a non-manual career. It is not possible to systematise the provision of employment for such blind persons to the same degree as in manual occupations. The treatment of each case will depend in an even higher degree than it does in manual work on the temperament, natural gifts and education of the blind person. Blind men of exceptional gifts have made good in the church, in the law, in political life and elsewhere. The great name of Milton shews how the very affliction of blindness itself can be turned to the highest uses of poetry: "that I may see and tell

Of things invisible to mortal sight." Scientific research usually demands sight, but even here some blind men are making good, e.g., at anthropology. Everyone should attempt to expand the possibilities of the blind.

At the same time, where a remunerative career is required, and where an overmastering gift of genius does not preclude choice, there are certain careers which are more promising for the blind than others. Music is the most obvious of these, and many blind men and women have been successful as musicians, whether as organists, music teachers, or in other ways. The chief difficulty here lies in the fact that the profession is overcrowded, and a real aptitude for music should be proved before encouragement is given. The National Institute and St. Dunstan's have found a promising development in massage, and a number of blind persons are now practising this profession with success. In America blind men have been successful as insurance agents.

In a number of occupations hearing is more important than sight. Many blind persons are successful telephone operators. In some cases a blind person, through unusual acuteness of hearing, may be able to specialise. Typewriting and shorthand can be done by the blind, but competition is severe, and the blind typist is handicapped by inability to do the ordinary office work for which sight is required.

Few works of greater promise for the blind can be undertaken than constant experiment with a view to finding new occupations for them and scientific study of the work for which they are specially fitted.

13. *Occupation in ordinary factories.*—One of the most interesting of these experiments in recent years has been the finding of work for blind persons in ordinary factories. This experiment is still in its infancy in this country and abroad, but one or two instances encourage the hope that in carefully selected processes in ordinary factories it may be possible for blind persons to become entirely self-supporting. Workers among the blind should be constantly exploring the possibilities of such employment in local industries.

14. Unemployed Blind.

These fall into two categories—those who are capable of being employed and those who are not. It is most important to distinguish between them, and every scheme for the aid of the necessitous blind should provide that anyone who is capable of being trained and usefully employed should be sent for training. A decision must depend on a careful study of the facts of each case, but the possibility of employment should never be overlooked. The returns as to the blind in 1927 shewed a total of 844 who were capable of training, but not yet receiving it.

15. Unemployable Blind.

The largest category of the blind remains that of the unemployable blind. There were 31,667 in 1927 out of a total of 46,822, or 67.6 per cent. A very small proportion of these possessed private means; a larger number are married women engaged in domestic duties in their homes. Probably from 18,000 to 20,000 are definitely incapable of performing any work of economic worth; 6,323 of them suffer from physical or mental defects in addition to their blindness. Some are accommodated in recognised Homes for the Blind, and a number are inmates of Poor Law Institutions. But the great majority reside in their own homes, are over 50 years of age, are eligible for Old Age Pensions and form almost the whole of the 14,563 blind pensioners in receipt of Old Age Pensions under the Blind Persons Act. Over 84 per cent. of the blind between 50 and 70 are in receipt of Old Age Pensions.

16. It will be seen that any scheme which concentrates on the education, training and employment of the blind, to the exclusion of the unemployable blind, is failing to deal with the larger proportion of the blind. One of the most striking developments in blind welfare work since 1919 has been the redressing of this balance, and more attention is being devoted to the needs of the unemployable blind than ever before.

These needs are twofold—financial and social. Even more important than means of livelihood is a life worth living.

17. THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE UNEMPLOYABLE BLIND.

The circumstances of these blind vary a great deal. A few have sufficient means of their own, some have husbands in a position to support them, others are in receipt of Old Age Pensions, or pensions from one of the Pension Societies for the Blind. Some who were insured are in receipt of Disablement Benefit, others are receiving compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Acts, or in other ways, in consequence of accident. Some are children living in good homes with their parents, or parents living with their children, and, so far as maintenance is concerned, are not in need of assistance. Others are lonely, helpless and destitute.

The first step is to make a careful analysis of the circumstances and means of each unemployable blind person. Until this has been done, all is guess work. When it is made it sometimes startles the workers with the magnitude of the need and sometimes reassures them by shewing that the problem is more manageable than they expected. It is as important to prevent waste of money on those who need no help as to make sure that no case needing help is overlooked.

When the analysis has been made, a definite policy of assistance should be laid down, and within it each case considered separately. In one instance the problem may be solved by finding relatives willing to help, in another a pension from a Blind Pension Society, or from a Parochial Charity, may make all the difference between straitened means and comfort. At the other end of the scale are the destitute, and the ultimate responsibility for dealing with these rests in law on the Guardians.

18. In dealing with blind persons the Guardians can have regard only to the question of destitution, and in some cases, the Blind Persons Act Authority have taken over the care and relief of all the blind, whether destitute or not. Another method, which has much to recommend it in suitable cases, is for the Guardians to appoint one of the officers of the Blind Institution to act as an Assistant Relieving Officer according to a definite scheme. Here the blind person deals with the Institution alone and not with the Guardians, and the Institution recover from the Guardians the cost of the approved out-relief administered by them.

19. In their Memorandum 27/B.D., which described what a scheme under the Blind Persons Act should contain, the Ministry of Health, in dealing with the unemployable blind, said, "it will rest upon the Local Authorities under the Act as an essential part of their duty to secure that reasonable provision is made for these persons." A large and growing number of authorities are laying down a scale up to which the income of each unemployable blind person should be brought, and have voted substantial sums to assist the funds of Voluntary Agencies to meet these payments. Others prefer to leave relief to the Guardians, but in all cases it is incumbent on the Local Authority under the Blind Persons Act to "secure that reasonable provision is made."

20. THE SOCIAL NEEDS OF THE UNEMPLOYABLE BLIND.

The needs of every class of the blind extend far beyond the means of livelihood. The imagination of men has always been touched by the tragic lot of a lonely blind person without resources within himself. A man or woman who suddenly loses sight is often the prey of blank despair, and the most humane and most fertile work which can be done by a worker among the blind is to inspire hope and contentment by shewing the many ways in which life can still be made worth while. The pivot of this social work among the blind is the Home Teacher.

21. THE HOME TEACHER.

The name "Home Teacher" is used in the Grant Regulations, and is the name by which these workers are generally known.

Teaching Braille and Moon and pastime occupations is an essential part of their work, but is only a part of it. Home Visiting and Welfare Work generally are also included. Home teaching for the blind was first organised in 1834 by the founding of the Indigent Blind Visiting Society, and it has developed to such an extent that there are now 360 Home Teachers, both men and (more often) women, employed throughout England and Wales, considerably more than three times the number in 1919. The aim of this service is to secure that all the blind who need visiting should receive visits systematically. In some places voluntary visiting has been organised efficiently, but generally it is necessary to organise systematic and regular visiting through salaried Home Teachers, who not only devote their whole time to the work, but have been specially trained for it. All Home Teachers in respect of whom grant is paid need the approval of the Ministry of Health, and it is a condition of approval in the case of all appointed since the 1st April, 1923, that they should obtain the home teaching certificate of the College of Teachers of the Blind within two years of appointment.

22. The Home Teachers' duties are so varied that it is impossible to describe them fully. They may, however, be conveniently summarised under six headings :—

(i) *Visiting.* (ii) *Teaching Braille or Moon.* (iii) *Teaching pastime occupations.* (iv) *Hygiene.* (v) *Welfare work.* (vi) *Social centres.*

(i) *Visiting.*—Probably the most valuable work of the Home Teacher lies in the simple and human way of creating contact, winning confidence and making friends. With the sick and the feeble this may be the only service which can be given. The Home Teacher may be asked to write a letter or see the need of repairing clothes or cleaning the room. As a friend there is no limit to the possibilities of service.

(ii) *Teaching of Braille or Moon.*—For occupying the mind through long hours of loneliness there is no resource so great as reading, and the Home Teacher will always endeavour, wherever there is sufficient mental alertness, to teach Braille. For those who have lost delicacy of touch through manual labour, or for those who find the Braille notation too difficult, the simpler Moon type can be taught. Good Home Teachers will make a point of getting to know the kind of literature that each of their readers prefers and will try to interest them in books and ideas. For this purpose they will keep in touch with the National Library through their local organisation and will see that the books needed are supplied.

Much can be done to stimulate the minds of those who cannot read. Books and new papers can be read aloud.

or the blind taken to suitable lectures or meetings. In many cases the lack of anyone to take them to places of public worship is keenly felt and arrangements can often be made to provide escorts. Sometimes a regular correspondence in Braille is kept up between blind persons, or between them and Home Teachers, and this not only develops facility in reading and writing Braille but exercises the faculty of self expression.

(iii) *Pastime Occupations.*—The function of a Home Teacher is quite different from that of a Supervisor of Homeworkers, and pastime occupation is taken up not in order to make a livelihood but to divert and exercise the mind. A pastime occupation can include other things than handicrafts, *e.g.*, music, games, or domestic work; or it may include handicrafts like knitting, crochet, string-bag making, chair-seating, bead work, wool-rug making and raffia work. The goods, when made, can sometimes be sold, and the small income from the sales may be very welcome to the blind, but it is occupation and not income which is the aim of pastime occupations.*

(iv) *Hygiene.*—The Home Teacher should always be watching the health of the blind. Suggestions can often be made on personal hygiene and diet, and on the cleanliness, ventilation, and sanitary condition of the home. One of the greatest difficulties of the blind is to take enough exercise in the open air to maintain health, and constant care should be devoted to this either by taking out the blind for walks or arranging for others to do so. In some cases a breakdown can be avoided by providing a holiday. There are Holiday Homes in various parts of the country.

(v) *Welfare Work.*—Home Teachers, like other welfare workers, must know the resources which are available. They will know all the hospitals in their district and can arrange for nursing at a moment's notice. They should be familiar with the various sources of financial assistance, whether from the Poor Law, a Pension Society for the Blind, a Parochial Charity, an Institution for the Blind, or the Local Authority. They will, either directly or indirectly through the Institution which employs them, keep in touch with the Local Education Authority as regards training. Close touch with the Mental Deficiency Committee, or the Voluntary Association working in connection with the Committee, will be of great assistance in dealing with the blind who are mentally defective. If bus and tram journeys can be obtained free they will assist

*The question of pastime occupations has been admirably discussed in prize essays, published in "The Teacher of the Blind," March and June, 1927.

their blind to obtain passes. If charitable people have theatre or concert tickets or wireless sets to dispose of, the Home Teacher will ask for them. There is no limit to the resourcefulness of a good Home Teacher.

(vi) *Social Centres.*—The blind, like the sighted, feel the strain of a life of solitude, and much good work is being done by organising social centres at which blind persons meet regularly for conversation, music, games, reading aloud, or pastime occupations. This work is still in an experimental state so far as details are concerned, but there can be no doubt as to the immense value of these organised social gatherings. Home Teachers usually are in charge, but the more assistance they can secure from voluntary workers the better.

As a rule social centres will be more easily organised in urban areas. The rural blind are scattered and it is difficult to collect them together. In some counties friends fetch them in motor cars and organise the centres. Where this is not possible much may be done in the villages by interesting Women's Institutes. Some Institutes have adopted a blind person, others have included the products of their handicrafts in sales of work. The human interest of the members of the Institutes will be invaluable.

23. It will be seen that Home Teachers with, say, the names of 80 blind persons on their books can rarely hope unaided to render in the fullest degree all the services set out above. There is no more promising outlet for the efforts of volunteers interested in the welfare of the blind than to assist in this sphere of the work. Volunteers can visit in the homes, can take the blind out for walks, can read aloud to them books and newspapers, can assist at social centres, concerts and entertainments, and in a variety of ways can render great service. But it is desirable that this service should not be haphazard. It should form a co-ordinated part of a well-planned scheme and to this end *volunteers should offer their services to their nearest Voluntary Agency for the blind and should, as far as possible, keep in touch with the Home Teacher.* The addresses of these Agencies are given in Appendix 2. If in doubt as to which Agency, the volunteer can consult the responsible local authority, viz., the Council of the County Borough or County.

24. HOSTELS FOR BLIND WORKERS.

While it is desirable that blind persons should, wherever possible, reside in their homes, a number of them have no homes and, in various parts of the country, hostels for blind workers have been provided near workshops. For the most part the occupants of these hostels are workshop employees, but in some cases home

workers and others are provided for. Much good work in brightening the lot of the blind workers is done in these hostels and some of them are models of their kind.

25. HOMES.

The lot of lonely aged or infirm blind persons is often peculiarly sad, and a number of homes have been provided in various parts of the country. This service does much to render happy the declining years of those who would otherwise be in great distress.

26. ORGANISATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

(*a*) Official.

(i) Central.
(ii) Local.

(i) *Central Organisations.*

The Ministry of Health and the Board of Education are the Departments of State responsible to Parliament for the Welfare of the Blind. The Board of Education deal with education, both elementary and higher (the special schools and the training departments, the latter being either independent Institutions or connected with Workshops for the Blind). The Ministry of Health is the Central Department for all matters relating to the blind under the Blind Persons Act, and they administer the grants payable out of moneys voted by Parliament for the Welfare of the Blind. Clearly the Ministry can only lay down a general policy and must leave the handling of individual cases to the Voluntary Agencies or the Local Authorities. The Ministry and the Board of Education have appointed Inspectors, some of whom are women, who are constantly visiting Institutions, Local Authorities and Local Committees throughout the country, and reporting to their Departments. In this way the Departments are kept in touch with local conditions, and the Inspectors are able by friendly advice and suggestion to share the experience gained.

The grants paid by the Ministry amounted to £69,886 in 1921–2, and to £112,510 in 1926–7. To this must be added an expenditure from the Exchequer of some £360,000 a year on Old Age Pensions for the Blind, and a considerable sum (probably about £130,000) by way of grant through the Board of Education in connection with education and training.

(ii) *Local Authorities.*

The Blind Persons Act, 1920, imposes on Local Authorities under that Act the duty of making arrangements to the satisfaction of the Minister of Health for promoting the welfare of blind persons ordinarily resident within their areas. These Authorities are the

62 County Councils, the Common Council of the City of London and the 83 County Borough Councils. In nearly every case the Local Authorities delegate the actual work, or a portion of it, to the Voluntary Agencies working in their areas, and many of them include in their estimates substantial sums to assist them in that work. The growth of the financial assistance rendered by Local Authorities may be judged from the fact that, while they voted £14,671 for this service in 1921–2, in 1925–6 they voted £135,946.

(*b*) Voluntary Organisations.

There is a great variety of Voluntary Organisations for the welfare of the blind, as may be seen by a reference to Appendix 2. Working in individual towns or districts are Institutions, sometimes of great size, which carry on technical training and manage Workshops and Home Workers Schemes, and in some cases Home Teaching services also. There are also a number of Home Teaching Societies who confine their attention mainly to the unemployable blind. Many of the Workshops and Home Teaching Societies are situate in County Boroughs, and they usually render services in respect of the whole of the County Borough, and of the piece of the county immediately surrounding it. For the centre of their area, therefore, they carry on services on behalf of one Local Authority, the County Borough Council, and for the rest of the area on behalf of another, the County Council.

Associated with these local Agencies the country is covered by the Union of Counties Associations, which is a union of seven Counties Associations, as follows :—

> Northern, Eastern, Metropolitan (sub-divided into (*a*) the County of London, (*b*) the Adjacent Counties, the latter covering the south-east of England), Western, Midland, South Wales, and North-Western.

These Counties Associations have formed in most parts of England, outside the Northern Counties Association, where the ground was largely covered by existing Institutions, separate associations for each county. These are usually the agents of the County Council for their work for the Welfare of the Blind in rural areas and in towns in which no agency is already working. They cover systematically the whole of the county area which is not already provided for. They usually carry out registration, the Home Teaching service and the care of the unemployable blind.

There are, in addition, a number of societies whose services are not local. A large number of Pension Societies exist. The Gardner Trust administers, in the interests of the blind, a very large bequest left by Mr. Gardner. The Clothworkers' Company also devote much money and other service to the blind.

There are three important organisations whose work is of national character—The National Institute for the Blind; the National Library for the Blind and St. Dunstan's

The National Institute for the Blind publish, on a large scale, books, newspapers, magazines, and other literature for the blind, in Braille and Moon, and provide apparatus and games for the blind. They also have established a number of Sunshine Homes for Blind Babies, the Chorley Wood College for Girls referred to above, and a number of residential and holiday homes for the blind, and render other services of a national character. They also conduct one service of a purely local nature, a large Home Workers' Scheme in London south of the Thames and in the South-eastern counties.

The National Library for the Blind is a circulating library of nearly 150,000 volumes, which supplies books, free of cost, either directly to blind persons or through local organisations or public libraries. It produces by hand, through voluntary and blind workers, a large number of books in Braille which are not available to the blind in any other form. The Post Office conveys the books to and from the readers at reduced rates of postage.

St. Dunstan's was organised by Sir Arthur Pearson during the War for the training, placement and after-care of soldiers, sailors and airmen blinded in the War. A complete service is rendered by St. Dunstan's to these men, and ordinarily it is not necessary for the local Agency to make any special arrangements for their welfare.

The sources of income of Voluntary Agencies are varied, *e.g.*, trust funds, subscriptions and donations, flag days, and other money-raising efforts. The societies to whom the Local Authorities have delegated the blind work in their areas receive, in addition to these voluntary contributions, such grants as may be earned under the regulations of the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health, and the sums voted by Local Authorities themselves. The Guardians can also make subscriptions to their funds.

Many feared that the introduction of State or rate-aided services for the blind would tend to reduce the volume of voluntary subscriptions. So far is this from being the case that the total income from voluntary sources of agencies recognised by the Ministry of Health for grant has risen from £378,535 in 1922–3 to £420,463 in 1924–5.

27. PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

Prevention is better than cure, and the best way of solving the problem of blindness, is, wherever possible, to prevent its occurrence. An important report was issued by the Departmental Committee on the Causes and Prevention of Blindness under the Chairmanship of the Right Hon. G. H. Roberts in September, 1922.*

Reference has already been made to the important results which have been achieved in checking blindness in infancy through the careful treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum. This disease is

*Copies of this report can be obtained from H.M. Stationery Office, or through any bookseller, price 4/-.

compulsorily notifiable, and all workers for the blind should urge immediate medical attention for any infant with inflamed eyes. A delay of even a few hours may have disastrous effects. A number of societies have issued useful leaflets upon this matter.

Local Education Authorities are required, with the sanction of the Board, under Sections 16 and 80 of the Education Act, 1921, to make arrangements for attending to the health of children educated in Public Elementary Schools, and these arrangements invariably include provision for attending to the children's eyesight. All children attending these schools are medically inspected on admission, at 8 and 12 years of age, and those who are found on the occasion of these inspections or at other times to be suffering from defects of vision are referred for refraction and full visual examination by an oculist. Spectacles are prescribed and provided, where required, at the expense of the parent with assistance, where necessary, from the Authority.

A number of Local Education Authorities have also provided, for myopic and other partially sighted children, special schools and classes, the main object of which is to check further deterioration of vision and so far as possible to prevent blindness ensuing.

Local Authorities have been empowered, by Section 66 of the Public Health Act, 1925, with the consent of the Minister of Health, to make such arrangements as they may think desirable for assisting in the prevention of blindness, and in particular for the treatment of persons ordinarily resident within their area suffering from any disease of, or injury to, the eyes. They have power to incur expenditure for this purpose, and some of them have made financial arrangements for the treatment in voluntary hospitals of diseases of, and injury to, the eyes of persons ordinarily resident in their district. The commoner diseases of the eye are dealt with in the Committee's report, which makes recommendations for the treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum, for educational provision for children of impaired vision, and as regards the education of medical students in ophthalmology. Blindness is caused by accident as well as disease, and the Committee make recommendations as to the precautions which should be taken in certain dangerous industrial processes. They refer to the danger of injury from flying shuttles in the textile industry, to the use of screens on lathes and abrasive wheels, and of goggles and masks for certain industrial processes, and in quarries, and to the provision of first-aid treatment for eye injuries in mining. They also recommend that all possible steps should be taken to encourage the development of Works and Safety Committees with regard to the prevention of accidents, the use of safety devices and methods of propaganda.

Voluntary Agencies, and all who are interested in the Welfare of the Blind, should be familiar with the resources available for the treatment of eye trouble, and should assist the sufferers to obtain proper treatment.

APPENDIX 1.

Summary of Grants payable:—

(i) *By the Ministry of Health.*

Regulations for Grants in aid of the Welfare of the Blind were issued by the Ministry of Health on the 7th August, 1919, and are still operative. They provide for grants to Agencies for the Welfare of the Blind at the following rates:—

Workshops	£20 per blind worker per annum.
Home Workers	£20 per blind worker per annmu.
Homes	£13 per blind resident per annum.
Hostels	£5 per blind resident per annum.
Home teaching	£78 per teacher per annum.
Initial expenditure in respect of tools and equipment for Home Workers.	50 per cent. of expenditure.
Book production	2*s.* 6*d.* per volume; 2*d.* per copy of magazine, periodical or sheet music.
Counties Associations	£20 per 100 registered blind persons resident in area per annum.

No capital grants other than those for tools and equipment of Home Workers are payable to Voluntary Agencies for the Blind.

Where a Local Authority provide any of the above services direct, the above grants are payable. In addition, grant is payable to a Local Authority in respect of approved capital expenditure whether incurred directly or by way of a capital contribution to a Voluntary Agency, normally at the rate of 50 per cent. grant of the annual loan charges.

(ii) *By the Board of Education.*

Regulations for Grant in aid of the Education, Training and Maintenance of Blind Children and Students are contained in the Board of Education (Special Services) Regulations, 1925—Grant Regulations No. 19.

Grant is payable to Local Education Authorities for Elementary and Higher Education in respect of this work under Grant Regulations No. 1 and Grant Regulations No. 4 respectively.

The grants payable in respect of Special Schools for blind children between the ages of two and sixteen and full-time Courses of Higher Education for Blind Students, recognised under Chapters 6 and 7 respectively of the Board of Education (Special Services) Regulations, 1925, are as follows:—

In the case of schools or institutions maintained by Local Education Authorities or of children or students sent by Local Education Authorities to schools or institutions maintained by Voluntary Managers, the Board pay to the Authorities a 50% grant on their net expenditure in respect of tuition, or, in the case of residential schools or institutions, in respect of tuition and maintenance.

In the case of pupils sent by Boards of Guardians, by bodies other than Local Education Authorities, or by private persons, to schools or institutions under voluntary managment grant at the following rates is payable by the Board to the Managers:—

£8 10 0 per annum per unit of average attendance in a Day School.
£16 10 0 per annum per unit of average attendance in a Boarding School.

Local Education Authorities are also empowered to grant maintenance allowances to Blind Students attending Institutions of Higher Education as day scholars subject to the conditions of the Board of Education Maintenance Allowance Regulations, Grant Regulations No. 14.

APPENDIX 2.

List of Voluntary Agencies for the Blind to whom grant is paid by the Ministry of Health in respect of services under the Regulations governing grants in aid of the Welfare of the Blind.

The list is arranged alphabetically under Counties, and Counties Associations are placed under the name of the place of their offices.

The addresses given are those of the Secretaries.

The letter after the name of each County shows under which of the Counties Associations it is grouped, thus:—N., Northern Counties Association; E., Eastern; M.L., Metropolitan and Adjacent Counties Association (London Branch); M.C., Metropolitan and Adjacent Counties Association (Home Counties Branch); W., Western; M., Midland; S.W., South Wales and Monmouth; N.W., North Western.

England (except Monmouthshire).

Bedfordshire (E.).
Luton.—South Beds. Society for the Blind (21/23, Williamson Street).
Bedford.—North Beds. Society for the Blind (43, St. Cuthberts).

Berkshire (M.C.).
Reading.—Reading Association for the Welfare of the Blind (1, Belle Avenue).
Berkshire County Blind Society (Kentons, Tilehurst Road).

Buckinghamshire (M.).
Aylesbury.—Buckinghamshire Association for the Blind. (23, Walton Street).

Cambridgeshire (E.).
Cambridge.—Cambridge Society for the Blind (5, Emmanuel Street).

Cheshire (N.W., but Wirral is N.).
Chester.—North-Western Counties Association for the Blind (33, Halkyn Road, Hoole).
Society for the Home Teaching of the Blind (33, Halkyn Road, Hoole).
Macclesfield.—Society for the Home Teaching of the Blind (Thornley, Ryles Park).
Stockport.—Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb ((St. Petersgate)

Cumberland (N.).
Carlisle.—Carlisle and Cumberland Workshops and Home Teaching Society for the Blind (Lonsdale Street).

Devonshire (W.).
Devonport.—Devonport and Western Counties Association for the Blind (Manor Lodge).
Exeter.—West of England Institution for the Blind (St. David's Hill, Exeter).
Newton Abbot.—Devon and Exeter County Association for the Blind (Bernstein).
Western Counties Association for the Blind ("Garston," Knowles Hill).
Plymouth.—S. Devon and Cornwall Institution for the Instruction and Employment of the Blind (North Hill).

Dorset (W.).
Dorchester.—Dorset County Association for the Blind (Ballinard, Queen's Avenue).

Durham (N.).

Darlington.—Darlington Blind Welfare and Home Teaching Society (Town Clerk's Office, Houndgate).

Middlesbrough.—Cleveland and South Durham Workshops for the Blind (59, Grange Road West).

South Shields.—South Shields Institution for the Blind (11, Keppel Street).

Sunderland.—Sunderland and Durham County Royal Institute for the Blind (23 and 24, Villiers Street).

W. Hartlepool.—Hartlepools' Workshops for the Welfare and Training of the Blind (11, Stanhope Avenue).

Essex (M.C.).

Colchester.—Colchester Home Teaching Society (87, East Hill).

Essex Voluntary Association (16, Union Court, Broad Street, London E.C.1).

Gloucestershire (W.).

Bristol.—Royal Blind Asylum Workshop (Museum Avenue, Park Street).

Cheltenham.—Cheltenham Workshops for the Blind (51, Winchcombe Street).

Avening.—Gloucestershire County Association for the Blind (Cherington Rectory).

Herefordshire (M.).

Hereford.—Herefordshire County Association for the Blind (High View, Ryeland Street).

Hertfordshire (M.C.).

Broxbourne.—Hertfordshire Association for the Blind (Wormley Lodge).

Huntingdonshire (E.).

Huntingdon.—Huntingdonshire Society for the Blind (68, High Street).

Isle of Ely (E.).

March.—Isle of Ely Society for the Blind (County Hall).

Isle of Wight (M.C.).

Carisbrooke.—Isle of Wight Society for the Benefit of the Indigent Blind (Castle Crag).

Kent (M.C.).

Sittingbourne.—Kent County Association for the Blind (1, Crescent Street).

Tunbridge Wells.—Workshop for the Blind (63, Calverley Road).

Lancashire (N).

Accrington.—Institution for the Blind and Prevention of Blindness (32, Bank Street).

Ashton-under-Lyne.—Ashton-under-Lyne, etc., Home Teaching for the Blind (7, Cobden Street).

Bacup.—Rossendale Society for Visiting and Instructing the Blind (Holmes Villa).

Barrow-in-Furness.—Barrow and District Society for the Blind (7, Hibbert Road).

Blackburn.—Blackburn and District Workshops for the Blind (Thornber Street).

Blackpool.—Blackpool and Fylde Society for the Blind (Tramway's Depot, Marton Street).

Bolton.—Workshops and Homes for the Blind (Marsden Road).

Burnley.—Burnley Home Teaching and General Help Society for the Blind (Tarleton House).

Bury.—Bury and District Civilian Blind Committee (9, Broad Street).

Colne.—Colne Blind Prevention and Aid Society (The Grove).
Liverpool.—Liverpool Catholic Blind Asylum (59, Brunswick Road).
Liverpool School for the Indigent Blind (Hardman Street).
Liverpool Workshops and Home Teaching, etc., for the Blind (Cornwallis Street).
Manchester.—Henshaw's Institution for the Blind (Old Trafford).
Manchester and Salford Blind Aid Society (30, Tonman Street, Deansgate).
NORTHERN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND (70A, Market Street).
Oldham.—Workshops for the Blind (New Radcliffe Street).
Oldham Home Teaching Society for the Blind (94, Oxford Street).
Preston.—Preston Industrial Institute for the Blind (Fulwood).
Rochdale.—Rochdale and District Society for Visiting and Instructing Blind (435, Bury Road).
St. Helens.—St. Helens and District Society for the Blind (70, Bickerstaffe Street).
Warrington.—Warrington, Widnes and District Society for the Blind (4, Museum Street).
Wigan.—Wigan Workshop for the Blind (Millgate).

Leicestershire (M.).
Leicester.—Leicestershire and Rutland Incorporated Institute for Blind (50, Granby Street).
Wycliffe Society for Helping the Blind (Victoria Hall, Mill Hill Lane).

Lincolnshire (E.).
Boston.—Boston and Holland Blind Society (10, Sleaford Road).
Grantham.—Kesteven (Lincs.) Blind Society (Carlton Scroop Manor).
Grimsby.—Grimsby Society for the Blind (170, Victoria Street).
Lincoln.—EASTERN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND (1A, Bailgate).
Lincoln Blind Society (Y.M.C.A., Guildhall Street).
Lindsey Blind Society (Y.M.C.A., Guildhall Street).

London (M.L.).
Barclay Workshops for Blind Women (21, Crawford Street, W.1).
Blind Employment Factory (246, Waterloo Road, S.E.1. Head Office—Highlands Road, Leatherhead).
British and Foreign Bible Society (146, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4).
Cecilia Home for Blind Women (111, Abbey Road, N.W.8).
College of Teachers of the Blind (c/o, 224–8, Gt. Portland Street, W.1).
Incorporated Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind (257, 258, Tottenham Court Road, W.1).
Indigent Blind Visiting Society (8, Red Lion Square, W.C.1).
London Association for the Blind (Rosedale House, 144A, Warwick Street, S.W.1).
London Society for Teaching and Training the Blind (Swiss Cottage, Hampstead, N.W.3).
METROPOLITAN AND ADJACENT COUNTIES ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND (LONDON) (Denison House, 296, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1).
METROPOLITAN AND ADJACENT COUNTIES ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND (HOME COUNTIES) (2, Deans Yard, Westminster, S.W.1)
National Institute for the Blind (224–8, Gt. Portland Street, W.1).
National Library for the Blind (35, Great Smith Street, S.W.1).
North London Homes for Aged Christian Blind Men and Women (77, Hanley Road, Crouch Hill, N.4).
Royal Association in Aid of the Deaf and Dumb, (413, Oxford Street, W.1).

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (Northumberland Avenue, W.C.).
Turner House Hostel (Church Army) (57, Bryanston Street, Marble Arch, W.1).
Workshops for Blind of Kent (49, London Street, Greenwich, S.E.10).

Middlesex (M.C.).
Middlesex Association for the Blind (2, Dean's Yard, London, S.W.1).

Norfolk (E.).
Norwich.—Institution for the Indigent Blind (132, Magdalen Street).

Northamptonshire (M.).
Northampton.—Northamptonshire (Town and County) Association for the Blind (15, Guildhall Road).

Northumberland (N.).
Newcastle-on-Tyne.—Newcastle and Gateshead, etc., Home Teaching Society for Blind (149, Pilgrim Street).
Workshops for the Adult Blind (Breamish Street).
North Shields.—Tynemouth Blind Welfare Society (45, Bedford Street).

Nottinghamshire (M.).
Nottingham.—Royal Midland Institution for the Blind (Chaucer Street).

Oxfordshire (M.).
Oxford.—Oxford Society for the Blind (23, Leckford Road).
MIDLAND COUNTIES ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND (23, Leckford Road).

Soke of Peterborough (M.).
Peterborough.—Peterborough Association for the Blind (234, Eastfield Road).

Shropshire (M.).
Shrewsbury.—Shropshire County Association for the Blind (134, Abbey Foregate).

Somerset (W.).
Bath.—Bath Home Teaching Society for the Blind (9, Cavendish Crescent).
Bridgwater.—Somerset County Association for the Blind (Huntworth House).

Southampton (M.C.).
Bournemouth.—Bournemouth and District Blind Aid Society (30, Wimborne Road).
Southampton.—Southampton Association for the Blind (7, Blenheim Chambers, The Junction, Above Bar).
Winchester.—Hampshire Association for the Care of the Blind (The Castle).

Staffordshire (M.).
Hanley.—Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffs. Workshops and Welfare Committee for the Blind (Victoria Road, Shelton).
Uttoxeter.—Staffordshire Association for the Blind (Ingleneuk, 21, New Road).
Walsall.—Walsall, Wednesbury and District Society for the Blind (139, Lichfield Street).
Wolverhampton.—Wolverhampton, Dudley and Districts Society for the Blind (Douro House, 62, Waterloo Road).

Suffolk (E.).
Ipswich.—E. Suffolk and Ipswich Association for the Blind (55, St. Matthew's Street).

Surrey (M.C.).
Croydon.—Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind (Eldon House, Wellesley Road).
Leatherhead.—Royal School for the Indigent Blind (Highlands Road).

Sussex (M.C.).
Brighton.—Barclay Home and School for Blind and Partially Blind Girls (Wellington Road).
Brighton Society for the Welfare of the Blind (Rooms 53 and 54, Prudential Buildings, North Street).
Lewes.—East Sussex County Association for the Blind (Falkland House).
St. Leonards.—Hastings Voluntary Association for the Blind (6, The Uplands).
West Worthing.—W. Sussex County Association for the Blind (32, Downview Road).

Warwickshire (M.).
Birmingham.—Royal Institution for the Blind (Carpenter Road, Edgbaston).
Coventry.—Coventry Society for the Blind (Thanet House, St. Patrick's Road).
Warwick.—Warwickshire Association for the Blind (Guys Cliffe).

Wiltshire (W.).
Upton Lovell.—Wilts. County Association for the Care of the Blind (Corton).

Worcestershire (M.).
Stourbridge.—Workshops for the Blind (Bank Street).
Worcester.—Worcester Association for the Blind (Sunningdale, Battenhall Road).

Yorkshire, East Riding (N.).
Kingston-upon-Hull.—Hull and East Riding Blind Institute (Beech Holme, Beverley Road).
York.—Yorkshire School for Blind (3, Blake Street).

Yorkshire, West Riding (N.).
Barnsley.—Barnsley Association for Visiting and Teaching the Blind (7, Bond Street).
Bradford.—Royal Institution for the Blind (Frizinghall).
Dewsbury.—Institution for the Blind of Dewsbury, Batley and District (Daisy Hill).
Doncaster.—Doncaster and District Home Teaching Society for the Blind (Briarcliffe).
Halifax.—Halifax Society for the Blind (Skircoat Moor Road, Savile Park).
Harrogate.—Harrogate and District Society for the Blind, (9, Spring Grove).
Huddersfield.—Huddersfield and District Blind Society (18, Ramsden Street).
Keighley.—Keighley Institution for the Blind (13, Scott Street).
Leeds.—Incorporated Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb (Albion Street).
Sheffield.—Sheffield Institution for the Blind (West Street).
Wakefield.—Wakefield Institution for the Blind (19, Queen Street).

Wales and Monmouthshire.

Carnarvonshire (N.W.).
Bangor.—North Wales Home Teaching Society for the Blind (54, College Road).

Glamorganshire (S.W.).

Cardiff.—South Wales and Monmouthshire. Counties Association for the Blind (13, St. Andrew's Crescent).

Cardiff Institute for the Blind (Longcross Street).

Dowlais.—Merthyr Tydfil Institution for the Blind (53, Gwladys Street, Pant).

Llwynypia—Rhondda Institution for the Blind (Pontrhondda Road).

Pontypridd.—Pontypridd and District Institution for the Blind (22, Wood Road).

Swansea.—Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind (Northampton Place).

Glynn Vivian Home of Rest for the Blind (Mumbles).

Monmouthshire (S.W.).

Newport.—Newport and Monmouth Blind Aid Society (199, Chepstow Road).

Note.—In addition to the above there are a large number of Societies providing pensions for the Blind. Reference may be made for these to a Handbook published by the Gardner Trust for the Blind, 53, Victoria Street, London, S.W. 1.

Enquiries as to any Agencies not included above should be addressed to the Counties Association of the area.

For educational Institutions, *see* note on p. 7.

APPENDIX 3.

The three Scales of Augmentation of the Earnings of Blind Employees in Workshops recommended by the Advisory Committee.

(1) *Scale* 1.

This was recommended in the Advisory Committee's First Report (1918–1919), page 9.

"A fixed sum of 15*s*. a week should be given by way of augmentation to all workshop employees earning up to 5*s*. a week at Trade Union or other standard rates of pay, and that where over 5*s*. a week is earned the augmentation should be reduced by 4*d*. in the 1*s*. for every 1*s*. earned over 5*s*."

(2) *Scale* 2.

In the light of further experience, the Advisory Committee in their Third Report for 1921–1922, page 9, recommended that the wages of workshop employees should be augmented on a sliding scale providing for a maximum grant of 15*s*. a week on earnings up to 10*s*. a week, at standard rates of pay, decreasing by 3*d*. in the 1*s*. to a minimum of 5*s*. a week augmentation where the wages are 50*s*. a week or more. The Ministry of Health recommended this scale to the consideration of Local Authorities in Memorandum 64/B.D. issued in March, 1922.

(3) *Scale* 3.

The Advisory Committee, finding that Scale 2 had not been very generally adopted, and with a view to the promotion of a greater degree of uniformity, recommended the following scale in their Sixth Report for 1924–1926, page 15.

"An augmentation allowance of 15*s*. a week should be made on all earnings up to 16*s*. a week, with deductions of 1*d*. in the 1*s*. for earnings between 16*s*. and 20*s*., 2*d*. in the 1*s*. for earnings from 20*s*. to 30*s*., and 3*d*. in the 1*s*. for all earnings over 30*s*. subject to a fixed augmentation allowance of 6*s*. 9*d*. for all earnings over 55*s*. a week. All deductions to run concurrently."

APPENDIX 4.

Old Age Pensions for the Blind.

1. Section 1 of the Blind Persons Act, 1920, provides that the Old Age Pensions Acts shall apply to all persons who are so blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential at the age of 50 instead of the age of 70. The Old Age Pensions Act, 1908, 1911, 1919 and 1924, therefore apply in all respects except as regards age in the case of the blind. The conditions laid down in these Acts require that a blind claimant should satisfy the pension authorities (i) that he has been a British subject for at least 10 years (this does not apply to a woman who would satisfy this condition but for her marriage to an alien); (ii) if he is a natural born British subject, that since attaining the age of 30 he has resided in the United Kingdom for at least 12 years in the aggregate. (If he is not a natural born British subject, he must have resided in the United Kingdom for an aggregate period of at least 20 years), (iii) that his yearly means as calculated under the Acts do not exceed £49 17*s.* 6*d.*

2. *In calculating means* regard must be had not only to property invested or otherwise put to profitable use, or capable of investment or profitable use, and to income in cash, but to the yearly value of any advantage accruing to the claimant from the personal use or enjoyment of property (e.g., a house belonging to the claimant in which he resides), and to the yearly value of any benefit or privilege (such as free board and lodging) enjoyed by the claimant. Means from property, investments. etc., are not calculated on the income actually derived but the capital value of the property is ascertained, and the yearly value is taken to be one-twentieth of the capital value so far as such value exceeds £25, but does not exceed £400, and anything above £400 is taken at one-tenth. *In calculating means an amount not exceeding £39 can be deducted from such part of the claimant's means as is not derived from earnings.*

For example, a blind man, who is single or a widower, earns 10*s* a week and is in receipt of a war pension of 12*s.* 6*d.* a week. His means from earnings are, therefore, £26 a year, and from other sources than earnings, £32 10*s.* The whole of the £32 10*s.* can be deducted in calculating means for pension, and he will be entitled to a full pension of 10*s.* a week, if he is otherwise qualified.

A blind spinster or widow is in receipt of a pension from a voluntary society of 15*s.* a week, i.e., £39 a year, and earns 10s. a week, i.e., £26 a year. In addition she has invested savings the yearly value of which, calculated as above, is £23. Her total means, therefore, are £88. Her means for pension purposes will be £88 less £39 (which are not derived from earnings), viz., £49. Her pension, therefore (*see* paragraph 3), will be 1*s.* a week, if she is otherwise qualified.

A blind man married to a sighted wife is in receipt of an allowance from a former employer of £1 a week, and he owns and occupies a house, of which the net Schedule A assessment is £30 a year. His wife earns 15*s.* a week. The total means are, therefore, £121, of which £82 is unearned. Of this £82, £39 can be deducted in respect of husband and wife, respectively, i.e., £78 in all. Net means for pension £121 less £78 = £43 divided by two = £21 10*s.* Therefore the man is entitled to a full pension of 10*s.* a week.

3. *The scales of pension* are as follows :—Where the means calculated as above do not exceed £26 5*s.* pension 10*s.*; from £26 5*s.* 1*d.* to £31 10*s.*, pension 8*s.*; from £31 10*s.* 1*d.* to £36 15*s.*, pension 6*s.*; from £36 15*s.* 1*d.* to £42, pension 4*s*; from £42 0*s.* 1*d.* to £47 5*s.*, pension 2*s.*; from £47 5*s.* 1*d.* to £49 17*s.* 6*d.*, pension 1*s.*; above £49 17*s.* 6*d.*, no pension.

4. *Method of obtaining pension.*—The nearest post office will supply the claimant with a form of claim, which on completion should be posted to the address printed on the form. The claim may be made at any time, not more than four months before the claimant attains 50. The claim, when received, will be referred to the local Pension Officer, and, after he has reported on it, will be decided by the local Pension Committee. It is open either to the Pension Officer or the claimant to appeal within 7 days of the receipt of the Committee's decision, to the Minister of Health. The Minister may, if he considers the circumstances special, entertain an appeal up to 14 days but not later.

5. *Evidence of blindness.*—If a claimant possesses any written evidence of blindness he should not send it with his claim but should be prepared to produce it to the Pension Officer on request. It is not necessary that he should obtain evidence himself. It he is a registered blind person, the Pension Officer will ask the local Voluntary Agency for the Blind to certify that he is known to the Society "as being so blind as to be unable to perform any work for which eyesight is essential." If the question of blindness arises on an appeal the Ministry will, if necessary, make arrangements for the claimant to be examined by a Regional Medical Officer of the Ministry. A case of special difficulty may be referred by the Ministry to an ophthalmic surgeon, to whom the Department pay any necessary fees, but this is the only case in which the Department bear the cost of a medical certification of blindness.

6. An explanatory leaflet on Old Age Pensions (Leaflet D) can be obtained from any Post Office.

APPENDIX 5.

National Health and Pensions Insurance.

1. The National Health Insurance and Pensions Schemes embrace in general persons between the ages of 16 and 70 (65 as from 2nd January, 1928), employed under a contract of service or as out-workers, the most important exception being persons engaged in non-manual employment remunerated at over £250 a year. Insurance is ordinarily effected through membership of an Approved Society, where possible, otherwise through the Deposit Contributors Fund.

2. Persons who have been compulsorily insured for at least 2 years may, on ceasing work, continue in insurance as voluntary contributors.

3. Normally, the rate of contribution is 1*s.* 6*d.* a week for a man, and 1*s.* 1*d.* a week for a woman, of which 9*d.* and 7*d.*, respectively, are paid by the employer.

4. The benefits provided, subject to certain qualifying and other conditions, are:—

National Health Insurance.

(*a*) Medical Benefit. Free medical attendance and treatment, and all necessary medicines.

(*b*) Sickness Benefit (normally men 15*s.* and women 12*s.* a week), maximum period 26 weeks, and

(*c*) Disablement Benefit (normally 7*s.* 6*d.* a week), payable when sickness benefit is exhausted (*see* paragraph 5 below).

(*d*) Maternity Benefit (40*s.*)

(*e*) Additional Benefits (the most common of which are payments for dental and ophthalmic treatment and increases in the rates of cash benefits) provided by Approved Societies having a disposable surplus on valuation.

Pensions.

(*a*) Widows' and Orphans' Pensions.

(*b*) Old Age Pensions at 65 as from 2nd January, 1928, (men and women 10*s.* a week). A Blind Old Age Pension will not be affected by the payment of this Pension.

5. Sickness and Disablement Benefits are payable during periods of incapacity for remunerative work. Blindness is not in itself necessarily ground for payment of benefit. Thus, blind persons who have, after training, become fit for some form of remunerative occupation would not ordinarily be entitled to benefit. A blind person who is unfit for, and untrainable for, any form of remunerative work would, on the other hand, generally be eligible for benefit; Approved Societies would not as a rule regard him as debarred from benefit solely because he might undertake some simple occupation purely as a pastime and to occupy his mind. The decision as to payment of benefit in individual cases rests with the Approved Society, subject to the insured person's right of appeal. Workers for the Blind can most effectively assist them in health insurance claims by placing their Approved Societies in possession of the facts. In case of difficulty the local (Insurance Department) Inspector of the Ministry of Health may be consulted.

6. Further information as to National Health and Pensions Insurance will be found in Leaflet 31 (Health) and Pamphlet 1 (Pensions), copies of which are obtainable from the Ministry of Health.

APPENDIX 6.

Summary of Official Publications helpful to Workers among the Blind.

(1) *Publications relating to the Welfare of the Blind.*

Circular and Regulations of the Ministry of Health governing Grants in aid of the Welfare of the Blind, dated 7th August, 1919. 3*d*. net.
Blind Persons Act, 1920. 1*d*. net.
Charities for the Blind; Regulations made by the Charity Commissioners and approved by the Minister of Health, 10th September, 1920, under the Blind Persons Act. 3*d*. net.
Memorandum as to what Schemes of Local Authorities under Section 2 of the Blind Persons Act, should contain. Memo. 27 B/D. 2*d*. net.
Model Form of Accounts for Approved Blind Agencies, dated 21st December, 1921. Circular 262. 3*d*. net.
Memorandum on Augmentation of Wages and Registration of Blind Persons and the Provision of Employment, dated 31st March, 1922. Memo. 64 B/D. 2*d*. net.
Circular relative to Co-operation between Training and Employing Agencies with regard to Blind Persons, dated 24th April, 1923. Circular 387. 1*d*. net.
Circular relative to the Definition of Blindness and Training and Employment of the Blind, dated 29th March, 1926. Circular 681. 2*d*. net.
Wireless Telegraphy Blind Persons (Facilities) Act, 1926. 1*d*. net.
Circular referring to Circular 681, and removing misunderstandings which had arisen as to the definition of blindness, dated 27th April, 1927. Circular 780. 1*d*. net.

(2) *Reports of the Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind.*

1st Report, 1918–19. 9*d*. net.
2nd Report, 1919–20, 6*d*. net.
3rd Report, 1921–22. 6*d*. net.
4th Report, 1922–23. 6*d*. net.
5th Report, 1923–24. 6*d*. net.
6th Report, 1924–26. 9*d*. net.

(3) *Blind Old Age Pensions.*

Summary of the Law and Regulations relative to Old Age Pensions and Blind Persons; Leaflet D (obtainable free from any Post Office).

(4) *National Health and Pensions Insurance.*

Leaflet on National Health Insurance, Leaflet 31 (Health).
Pamphlet on the duties of Employers in National Health and Pensions Insurance, Pamphlet A.
Pamphlet on Pensions Insurance: Pamphlet 1 (Pensions).
(These are obtainable free from the Ministry of Health).
Approved Societies Handbook. 1*s*. 6*d*. net.

(5) *Unemployment Insurance.*

Summary of the Unemployment Insurance Acts, 1920–25: Leaflet U.I.L.4.
Leaflet as to Claims for and Conditions of Benefit: Leaflet U.I.L.8.
(These are obtainable free at any Employment Exchange or at the Ministry of Labour.)

(6) *Training and Education.*

Board of Education (Special Services) Regulations, No. 19, 1925. 4*d*. net.
List of Certified Special Schools and Recognised Institutions for the Training of Blind and other Defective Students, and Nursery Schools in England and Wales; List 42. 1*s*. net.

(7) *Causes and Prevention of Blindness.*

Departmental Committee's Report on. 1922. 4*s*. net.

Except where otherwise stated copies of the above may be purchased directly from H.M. Stationery Office, at the following addresses: Adastral House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; York Street, Manchester; 1, St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff; or through any bookseller.

Printed under the authority of His Majesty's Stationery Office,
By Wyman & Sons, Limited, Fetter Lane, London, E.C. 4.

8/27. (1598) Wt. 16518—1053. 1,000. 11/27. Wy. & S., Ltd. Gp. 2.